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JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE
JOINT ADVANCED WARFIGHTING SCHOOL



**GRAND STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES:
A Study of the Process**

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.

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ABSTRACT

The thesis of this paper is that the U.S. government must adopt a clearly defined process for developing and articulating grand strategy. This process must include written guidance and definitions to improve the efficacy of the legislative and executive branches' in the execution of their duties to support a coherent foreign policy. This thesis is about adopting a process for developing and articulating grand strategy. This process is for the decision makers at the highest level of our government. The problem is there is no clearly defined grand strategic formulation, standard, or guidance. By default, the National Security Strategy (NSS), first mandated by the legislature on the executive in the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1987, became a repository for some basic elements of strategic guidance and thought. There are three primary reasons why adopting a process for a grand strategy is important at this time. The first is the need for clear guidance to reduce inefficiencies. The second is the need to employ the instruments of national power more effectively. Third, the government needs capstone guidance outlining the process, and then it needs a clear example in the form of the GSUS to inform lesser strategic documents. The method used to prove the necessity for adopting a clearly defined process for developing and articulating grand strategy will be a review of literature through a series of chapters highlighting how strategy and grand strategy are defined, how strategic choices are made, and how strategic choices are implemented. Based on this analysis, a model for the formulation of grand strategy presented as a way of guiding policymakers and strategic thinkers in a new post-Cold War environment.

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INTRODUCTION

“We first committed ourselves to the war and then began to think about it comprehensively. The highest level leadership did not initially sit down and address in detailed and extended fashion its strategic position, did not discuss and analyze enemy strengths, weaknesses, and probable strategies, did not wrangle and argue and finally hammer out a fully articulated strategy. There was in this behavior a sense of enormous self-confidence, indeed a kind of unconscious arrogance on the part of the Americans”

—Douglas Pike, 1986¹ (discussing Vietnam)

The need for a grand strategy for the United States is currently being debated in books, journal articles and in Congressional hearings. Many claim the U.S. has been without a grand strategy since the fall of the Soviet Union. The most common argument is the U.S. lacks a grand strategy to organize the government to effectively and efficiently confront the security issues the nation faces today. Although the government does not publish a document identified as The Grand Strategy of the United States (GSUS) that does not mean the nation is without a grand strategy. Some say that the unpublished U.S. grand strategy is the global promotion and support of freedom and democracy.² The problem is there is no clearly defined grand strategic formulation, standard, or guidance. By default, the National Security Strategy (NSS), first mandated by the legislature on the executive in the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1987, became a repository for some basic elements of strategic guidance and thought. The NSS provided a venue to convey national interests and national objectives. However the intended audience is composed of the elements of government concerned with national security. The Goldwater-Nichols Act, was written during the Cold War, and it was not directly concerned with a whole of

¹ Roger Spiller, “‘The Small Change of Soldiering’ and the American Military Experience,” in *Armed Diplomacy: Two Centuries of American Campaigns*. (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2003), 285

² Andrew R. Hoehn, Adam Grissom, David A. Ochmanek, David A. Shlapak, Alan J. Vick, *A New Division of Labor: Meeting America’s Security Challenges Beyond Iraq*. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Project Air Force, 2007), 5.

government approach that prevails today. The NSS evolved as a portal for grand strategy to emerge. At the time the Goldwater-Nichols Act was signed into law requiring the President to submit an NSS, the 30 year old grand strategy called containment was still being employed. The most recent NSS 2006 was used as a combination strategy and a political instrument to tout the successes of the administration in the Global War on Terror (GWOT). This diminished the value of the NSS as a vehicle for delivering apolitical guidance to the government as a whole.³ The thesis of this paper is that the U.S. government must adopt a clearly defined process for developing and articulating grand strategy. This process must include written guidance and definitions to improve the efficacy of the legislative and executive branches' in the execution of their duties to support a coherent foreign policy. This thesis is about adopting a process for developing and articulating grand strategy. This process is for the decision makers at the highest level of our government.

There are three primary reasons why adopting a process for a grand strategy is important at this time. The first is the need for clear guidance to reduce inefficiencies. The second is the need to employ the instruments of national power more effectively. Third, the government needs capstone guidance outlining the process, and then it needs a clear example in the form of the GSUS to inform lesser strategic documents.

All resources are limited. Without clear guidance organizations lack a unifying direction based on a common goal which prevents division of labor and resources along specified lines of responsibility.

³ Patrick A. McClelland, "The National Security Strategy of the United States: Grand Strategy or Propaganda?" (master's thesis, Joint Forces Staff College, 2007), 53-54.

Since the end of the Cold War, there has been no consensus on what the nation's grand strategy should or could be. Although the resources to protect the nation are essentially fixed, the current reality is there are too many variables in the strategic formulation system and the strategic environment is unpredictable.

The method used to prove the necessity for adopting a clearly defined process for developing and articulating grand strategy will be a review of literature through a series of chapters highlighting how strategy and grand strategy are defined, how strategic choices are made, and how strategic choices are implemented. Based on this analysis, a model for the formulation of grand strategy presented as a way of guiding policymakers and strategic thinkers in a new post-Cold War environment.

CHAPTER ONE

GRAND STRATEGY DEFINED

“America has gone so long since the last period when we had to rethink the world and how it works that we’ve basically lost the grand-strategy skill set. Worse, this is the first time in our nation’s history when our trajectory of success has led to such a cluster of rising great powers that our instinct for continued leadership could easily be overwhelmed by fears of competitive disadvantage...we need enough confidence...that we don’t abandon our bodyguard role in protecting globalization’s continued advance and subsequent network consolidation. If we can’t muster that confidence, we’ll be unable to lead...the result being a world afraid of the inevitable ‘chaos’ that ensues.”

—Thomas P.M. Barnett, 2009⁴

“Grand strategy has to do with the application of power and resources to achieve large national purposes...Today the United States possesses abundant, even historic, power. But we do not possess a grand strategy. We do not have a coherent framework for applying our powers to achieve large national purposes.”

—Gary Hart, 2004⁵

Grand strategy is a component within government that crosses many facets from foreign policy to resource allocation. Decisions made in grand strategic context have implications throughout government, for instance, resources invested in foreign policy may detract from monies available for domestic policy. Understanding the parameters that define grand strategy is the task of this chapter. Every author on the subject of grand strategy provides a unique definition that attempts to add clarity and understanding. There is no agreed government definition for grand strategy. Even if an agreed definition existed, issues of context and language limitations would still surround discussions of policy, comprehensive national strategy, or grand strategy. This chapter reviews definitions of strategy and grand strategy to include a historical perspective and to examine some of the similarities and nuances.

⁴ Thomas P.M. Barnett, *Great Powers: America and the World After Bush* (New York: Putnam, 2009), 419-420.

⁵ Gary Hart, *The Fourth Power: A Grand Strategy for the United States in the 21st Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3.

The word strategy is from the Greek *strategos*—meaning generalship or warrior-politician of ancient Athens. It is simply defined as “what the *strategos* does.” The *strategos* employed all elements of national power in war and peace. His task was to develop and execute plans of action that combined politics, economics and the military dimensions of war. At its origin, strategy meant employing all elements of national power to accomplish the desired objective.⁶

In order to get a complete picture of grand strategy and how it’s defined, a review of definitions in the literature assists in understanding the development of what grand strategy is in government. Grand strategy is a concept that grew out of strategy. As theorists and practitioners used the term strategy to articulate their experiences and perceptions of warfare, they realized the need to discuss levels within strategy. As a starting point, Clausewitz defined tactics as managing troops to win battles, and strategy is what generals used to manage battles to win wars.⁷ An examination of definitions of strategy and grand strategy will begin with currently recognized definitions used by the Department of Defense (DoD).

Definitions from Joint Publication and the U.S. Code

The *Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (JP 1-02) is the repository of approved definitions for use by the DoD. Over the past 8 years there have been changes to many of the definitions. Comparisons of the changes are highlighted in Figure 1. In JP 1-02, the term strategy went from being the ‘art and science of employing instruments of national power in peace and war to support

⁶ Leonhard, Robert R., “From Operational Art to Grand Strategy.” In *Rethinking the Principles of War*, edited by Anthony D McIvor. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 211.

⁷ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, translated and edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 146.

policies...' to 'a prudent idea for employing instruments of national power to achieve objectives.' This new definition provides no added clarity to understanding the concept of strategy. In fact the 2001 definition provides more depth.

<p align="center"><u>Comparison of Strategic Definitions from</u> <u>Joint Publication 1-02, DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms</u></p>	
<p><i>Definitions preceded with (2008) are extracted from the online version dated 12 April 2001 (As amended through 17 October 2008). Accessed at http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf on 13 March 2009. Definitions preceded with (2001) are extracted from the print version dated 12 April 2001.</i></p>	
(2008) strategy	– A prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives.
(2001) strategy	– The art and science of developing and using political, economic, informational, and military forces as necessary during peace and war, to afford the maximum support to policies, in order to increase the probabilities and favorable consequences of victory and to lessen the chances of defeat. See also military strategy ; national strategy .
(2008) grand strategy	– See National Security Strategy .
(2001) grand strategy	– See national security strategy ; national strategy .
(2008) <i>The term national strategy is no longer defined.</i>	
(2001) national strategy	– The art and science of developing and using the diplomatic economic, and informational powers of a nation, together with the its armed forces, during peace and war to secure national objectives. Also called national security strategy or grand strategy . See also strategy .
(2008) <i>The term national objectives is no longer defined.</i>	
(2001) national objectives	– The aims derived from national goals and interests, toward which a national policy or strategy is directed and efforts and resources of the nation are applied. See also military objective .
(2008 & 2001) national policy	— A broad course of action or statements of guidance adopted by the government at the national level in pursuit of national objectives.
(2008 & 2001) strategic level of war	— The level of war at which a nation, often as a member of a group of nations, determines national or multinational (alliance or coalition) strategic security objectives and guidance, and develops and uses national resources to achieve these objectives. Activities at this level establish national and multinational military objectives; sequence initiatives; define limits and assess risks for the use of military and other instruments of national power; develop global plans or theater war plans to achieve those objectives; and provide military forces and other capabilities in accordance with strategic plans. See also operational level of war ; tactical level of war .
(2008) National Security Strategy	– A document approved by the President of the United States for developing, applying, and coordinating the instruments of national power to achieve objectives that contribute to national security. Also called NSS . See also National Military Strategy ; strategy ; theater strategy .
(2001) national security strategy	– The art and science of developing, applying, and coordinating the instruments of national power (diplomatic, economic, military, and informational) to achieve objectives that contribute to national security. Also called national strategy or grand strategy . See also military strategy ; national military strategy ; strategy ; theater strategy .
(2008) National Military Strategy	— A document approved by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for distributing and applying military power to attain national security strategy and national defense strategy objectives. Also called NMS . See also National Security Strategy ; strategy ; theater strategy .
(2001) national military strategy	– The art and science of distributing and applying military power to attain national objectives in peace and war. Also called NMS . See also military strategy ; national security strategy ; strategy ; theater strategy .

Figure 1 – Comparison of JP 1-02 Strategic Definitions

The term grand strategy in 2001 was cross-referenced to national security strategy. It describes grand strategy as coordinating all instruments of power to achieve objectives that contribute to national security. The 2008 definition equates grand strategy to the NSS document. This suggests that the NSS is the grand strategy. If the law were followed, then the NSS might be the best vehicle to describe a grand strategy. The law states the NSS is an annual report provided to Congress from the President with the budget for the next fiscal year and shall:

- ...include a comprehensive description and discussion of the following:
- (1) The worldwide interests, goals, and objectives of the United States that are vital to the national security of the United States.
- (2) The foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and national defense capabilities of the United States necessary to deter aggression and to implement the national security strategy of the United States.
- (3) The proposed short-term and long-term uses of the political, economic, military, and other elements of the national power of the United States to protect or promote the interests and achieve the goals and objectives referred to in paragraph (1).
- (4) The adequacy of the capabilities of the United States to carry out the national security strategy of the United States, including an evaluation of the balance among the capabilities of all elements of the national power of the United States to support the implementation of the national security strategy.
- (5) Such other information as may be necessary to help inform Congress on matters relating to the national security strategy of the United States.”⁸

The NSS lacks credibility as an objective platform to convey the requirements of the law. In fairness, the law requires a robust document that would be a daunting task for any President and his staff to draft in the current international environment. Few, if any, of the requirements required by the law are absolutes, most are opinions, and those opinions would forever be lost to scrutiny and debate on the global stage if addressed every year.

⁸ 50 USC Sec. 404a

In the last administration, the NSS became more of a political report card instead of a playbook for setting the government on the same vision for the future.⁹

When Congress mandated the NSS in 1987 with the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the intent was for the Executive Branch to inform the Legislative Branch on how they intended to invest the national treasure being provided by Congress. It is important to recall that the Cold War was still on going when Senator John Warner added this amendment to the bill that became the Goldwater-Nichols Act.¹⁰ Congress wanted the administration to provide vision for how the entire executive branch would focus all elements of national power to achieve interests, goals, and objectives. As mentioned in the introduction of this paper, the NSS has lost credibility as a vehicle for providing the grand strategic vision intended by Congress.¹¹

There are two general observations from reviewing the eight JP 1-02 definitions compared in Figure 1. One is the migration of strategy from an “art and science” to either a document or an idea. This change was a move away from looking at strategic art as a process. It infers less critical thinking and more likely general labeling. The other observation is that six of the eight compared definitions changed and the new definitions seem to constrain terminology and vocabulary for discussing strategic formulation. It also illustrates the ease with which terms can be redefined. The potential exists for an administration to simply change the way terms are defined to suit their own needs.

Review of Definitions in Literature

⁹ Patrick A. McClelland, “The National Security Strategy of the United States: Grand Strategy or Propaganda?” (master’s thesis, Joint Forces Staff College, 2007), 54.

¹⁰ James L. Locher, III, “Goldwater-Nichols: Fighting the Decisive Battle,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, Summer 2002, 46.

¹¹ Patrick A. McClelland, 53-54.

Three students at National Defense University's Joint Advanced Warfighting School have written master's theses that examined the literature attempting to provide background and clarity to understanding the definition of grand strategy. All of the authors offered their own definitions for grand strategy. This paper stands on the shoulders of their research.¹² The literature is exhaustive on the topic of strategy and grand strategy. It still is necessary to examine some definitions with the intent to identify grand strategy foundations from recognized experts in theory.

Early theorists began to stratify levels of thought about war. Clausewitz defines strategy as an if/then statement. If tactics is the effective employment of military force in battle, then strategy is the effective employment of battles to ensure victory in war.^{13,14} Clausewitz does not use the term grand strategy, but he does discuss concepts that are essential to the theorists that followed him. First, he firmly establishes the responsibility for war making on nation-state leaders. "It is...well known that the only source of war is politics – the intercourse of governments and peoples...war is simply a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means."¹⁵ Second, he recognized that if war is a continuation of politics, then leaders of governments must thoroughly understand warfare as a general would. He states that to successfully win a war; government leaders must have a "thorough grasp of national policy. On that level strategy and policy coalesce: the commander-in-chief is simultaneously a statesman...he is aware of the

¹² The three theses include: 2005 – J. A. Bassani, "Saving the World for Democracy – An Historical Analysis of America's Grand Strategy in the 21st Century"; 2007 – Patrick A. McClelland, "The National Security Strategy of the United States: Grand Strategy or Propaganda?"; 2008 – Richard K. Gannon, "Recapturing U.S. Grand Strategy: Shaping Iraq Success with Post-Conflict Lessons from Europe and Japan."

¹³ Clausewitz, *On War*, 146.

¹⁴ Paul M. Kennedy, (editor). *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 1.

¹⁵ Clausewitz, *On War*, 99, 731.

entire political situation...he knows exactly how much he can achieve with the means at his disposal.”¹⁶ Without directly naming grand strategy, Clausewitz identified its operating area as the highest level of policy making.

The foundation for understanding the essence of grand strategy and where it fits in the discussion of strategy comes from Edward Mead Earle’s 1944 introduction to *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler*.

“Strategy deals with war, preparation for war and the waging of war...But war and society have become more complicated—and war...is an inherent part of society—strategy...require(s) increasing consideration of nonmilitary factors, economics, psychological, moral, political, and technological. Strategy therefore, is not merely a concept of wartime, but is an inherent element of statecraft at all times.

...strategy is the art of controlling and utilizing the resources of a nation...including its armed forces, to the end that its vital interests shall be effectively promoted and secured against enemies actual, potential, or merely presumed. The highest type of strategy—sometimes called grand strategy—is that which so integrates the policies and armaments of the nation that the resort to war is either rendered unnecessary or is undertaken with the maximum chance of victory.”¹⁷

In 1967, B.H. Liddell Hart, English military historian and theorist, wrote extensively of grand strategy as the highest-level of strategy. He observed that the differences between strategy and policy would little matter if “the two functions were combined in the same person, as with Frederick (the Great) or a Napoleon.” He recognized that in modern times this was rare; today it is non-existent.¹⁸ According to Liddell Hart, grand strategy is policy which directs warfighting. It is “policy in execution” that brings together all the resources of a nation to win a war. Grand strategy brings together economic resources, men to fight, moral forces to buttress the will of the

¹⁶ Clausewitz, *On War*, 130.

¹⁷ Edward Mead Earle, *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1943), viii.

¹⁸ B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*. (New York: Fredrick A. Preager, Inc., 1967), 319

people to fight and support the fight. Grand strategy is more than the military. It is the application of economic, diplomatic, commercial, and ethical pressure to break the will of an enemy. “Grand strategy looks beyond the war to the subsequent peace. It should not only combine the various instruments, but so regulate their use as to avoid damage to the future state of peace.”¹⁹ Liddell Hart attempts to grasp the scope of grand strategy, but his argument lacks focus and completeness that allows the definition to stand without debate.

In 1987, Edward N. Luttwak, a Senior Associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., described five levels of strategy in his book, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace*. The fifth and highest level of strategy is grand strategy. He described grand strategy as the place of “national struggle” while conducting war and preparing for war—the people and government must balance issues of: military readiness and sustainment, requirements and sacrifices on the domestic agenda, ultimate foreign policy, and impact on economic activity. Luttwak keenly articulates, “Because ultimate ends and basic means are both manifest only at the level of grand strategy, the resource limits of military action are defined at that level.”²⁰ That says grand strategy is the “only” level where leaders determine what the end state or ultimate outcome will be and what resources the nation is willing to commit to that outcome.

In 1991, Paul M. Kennedy, former research assistant for B.H. Liddell Hart and now Professor of History at Yale University, defined grand strategy in his introduction to *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*. Kennedy is probably best known as the author of *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. He defines grand strategy:

¹⁹ Liddell Hart, 321-322.

²⁰ Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 70.

“The crux of grand strategy lies...in *policy*, that is, in the capacity of the nation’s leaders to bring together all of the elements, both military and nonmilitary, for the preservation and enhancement of the nation’s long-term (that is, in wartime and peacetime) best interests. Such an endeavor is full of imponderables and unforeseen “frictions.” It is not a mathematical science in the Jominian tradition, but an art in the Clausewitzian sense—and a difficult art at that, since it operates at various levels, political, strategic, operational, tactical, all interacting with each other to advance (or retard) the primary aim.”²¹

In 1998, in his book, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II*, Geoffrey Parker, Professor of History at Ohio State University argues that grand strategy “encompasses the decisions of a state about its overall security—the threats it perceives, the way in which it confronts them, and the steps it takes to match ends and means.”²² This definition focuses on actions for national survival as the primary focus of grand strategy.

In 2003, Robert J. Art, Professor of International Relations at Brandeis University, wrote *A Grand Strategy for America*. In it he says, “grand strategy tells a nation’s leaders what goals they should aim for and how best they can use their country’s military power to attain those goals.” He compares grand strategy and foreign policy. In defining foreign policy, he says a state establishes national goals and directs how the state uses its “instruments of statecraft—political power, military power, economic power, ideological power” to achieve national goals. According to Art, grand strategy is similar, “but it concentrates primarily on how the military instrument should be employed to achieve (those goals).” He concludes grand strategy “prescribes how a nation should wield its military instrument to realize its foreign policy goals.”²³ Art chooses to definitively separate grand strategy as the military focus of foreign policy. This stands out from other definitions that tend to keep grand strategy synonymous with foreign policy.

²¹ Kennedy, 5.

²² Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 1.

²³ Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 1-2.

In 2006, in his book *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present*, Christopher Layne, Associate Professor at the Bush School of Government and Public Service, Texas A & M University defines grand strategy:

Distilled to its essence, grand strategy is about determining a state's vital interests—those important enough to fight over—and its role in the world. From that determination springs a state's alliances overseas military commitments, conception of its stake in the prevailing international order, and the size and structure of its armed forces.²⁴

Layne's understanding of grand strategy transcends instruments of power...it's about determining vital interests and a nation's role in the world, then figuring how much to spend on it.

Also in 2006, Drew and Snow's latest edition of *Making Twenty-First Century Strategy*, they provide two definitions for grand strategy. The first definition is given while discussing grand strategy formulation. It is "*grand national strategy can be usefully defined as the art of coordinating the development and use of the instruments of national power to achieve national security objectives.*" The second definition is offered in the chapter on Grand National Strategy. It is "*grand national strategy is the process by which the country's basic goals are realized in a world of conflicting goals and values held by other states and nonstate actors.*"²⁵ Drew and Snow do not highlight the difference in the definition they offer, yet it is consistent with the definitions offered in their first version of the book in 1988.²⁶ They do emphasize that attempting to define the grand strategy process as a "neat and compartmentalized" process is folly. Terms used tend to blend and

²⁴ Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 13.

²⁵ Dennis M. Drew and Donald M. Snow. *Making Twenty-First Century Strategy: An Introduction to Modern National Security Processes and Problems* (Maxwell AFB AL: Air University Press, 2006), 17, 31.

²⁶ Dennis M. Drew and Donald M. Snow. *Making Strategy: An Introduction to National Security Processes and Problems*. Maxwell AFB AL: Air University Press, 1988, 16, 27.

flow to fit the author or speaker. Drew and Snow profess the use of exacting terms and definitions “is unnecessary if one bears in mind that the strategy process is a series of interrelated decisions rather than a group of loosely related planning events.”²⁷

In 2007, Kevin Narizny in his book *The Political Economy of Grand Strategy* defined “grand strategy...most concisely as the general principles by which an executive decision maker or decision-making body pursues its international political goals...much like foreign policy, but at a higher level of abstraction, focusing on broad patterns of behavior rather than specific decisions. It is *strategy* in the purest sense of the word.”²⁸ Narizny alludes that grand strategy may not be written, but that it may patterns of behavior guided by general principles in pursuit of political goals. He goes on to highlight that several previous definitions assume that the most important goal of grand strategy is security.

“For example, Barry Posen (1984) writes that grand strategy is a ‘political-military means-ends chain, a state’s theory about how it can best *cause* security for itself...A grand strategy must identify likely threats to the state’s security and it must devise political, economic, military, and other remedies for those threats.’ Similarly, Thomas Christensen (1996) writes, ‘I define grand strategy as the full package of domestic and international policies designed to increase power and national security.’”²⁹

Narizny argues that to over focus on security as the primary purpose of grand strategy creates an incomplete understanding of grand strategy. While states are interested in protection of their homelands, seldom is it the only consideration influencing their behavior. They may have interests that seek territorial expansion, protect trade or access to resources, or champion an ideology.

²⁷ Drew and Snow; *Making Twenty-First Century Strategy*, 26.

²⁸ Kevin Narizny, *The Political Economy of Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 8-9.

²⁹ Ibid.

“The problem is that grand strategy is a multidimensional concept. It encompasses such diverse facets of a state’s behavior as its willingness to provide public goods, cooperate in multilateral organizations, and support international law; its military strategy and force deployments; its predilection for territorial aggression, economic autarchy, and alliance making; and its level of defense spending.”³⁰

The key take away from Narizny is that there are endless combinations of interests that influence grand strategy.

In 2008, Harry R. Yarger, Professor of National Security Policy in the Department of National Security and Strategy at the USAWC wrote *Strategy and the National Security Professional*. In it, he cites a definition for grand strategy from a 2004 USAWC Course Directive.

Grand Strategy. An overarching strategy summarizing the national vision for developing, applying and coordinating all the instruments of national power in order to accomplish the grand strategic objectives of: preserve national security; bolster national economic prosperity; and promote national value. Grand Strategy may be stated or implied.³¹

Simply restated, Yarger says grand strategy is a vision for how to use instruments of national power to accomplish the core national objectives.

In conclusion, this chapter reviewed how the definition of strategy and grand strategy changed over time. The definition of strategy changed and evolved as the international environment changed. B.H. Liddell Hart quoting Clausewitz defined strategy as “the art of the employment of battles as a means to gain the object of war...strategy forms the plan of the war, maps out the proposed course of the different campaigns which compose the war, and regulates the battles to be fought in each.”³²

Today, JP 1-02 defines operational art as “...to design strategies, campaigns, and major

³⁰ Kevin Narizny, *The Political Economy of Grand Strategy*, 11.

³¹ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional: Strategic Thinking and Strategy Formulation in the 21st Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008), 21.

³² Liddell Hart, 319.

operations and organize and employ military forces...”³³ The point here is yesterday’s strategy is today’s operational art. The early writings about strategic theory were not in error. They were accurate for the time they were written. As conflict became global, technology allowed for increased span of control, and as democracy flourished it became necessary to differentiate strategy from grand strategy. Grand strategy definitions and concepts grew out of strategy. There became a need to describe and discuss how a nation managed its sources of power and applied that power toward its desired goals. The next chapter will examine models of strategy and grand strategy.

³³ Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*. (April 12 2001), as amended through October 17 2008, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf (accessed April 5 2009)

CHAPTER TWO

MODELS TO UNDERSTAND GRAND STRATEGY

“The challenge of statesmanship is to have the vision to dream of a better, safer world and the courage, persistence, and patience to turn that dream into reality.”

—Ronald Reagan, 1985³⁴

Every few weeks a new book or article is published in foreign policy or military journals about the need for a new grand strategy. During the 2008 Presidential campaign developing a new comprehensive grand strategy was a topic of discussion for congressional hearings and think tank studies. The purpose of this paper is to justify adopting a process that is transparent to develop and express grand strategy.

This chapter is a review of the literature on conceptual models for understanding strategy as a process. Models are helpful when definitions seem to be flexible. This overview should highlight how the concepts used to depict basic strategy can be used as models become more complex. Another observation is that there are few articles or studies that directly model grand strategy development. The models introduced progress from a basic understanding of the vocabulary used to discuss strategy to more complex models to build appreciation of the complexities and dynamics of the strategy process. In reviewing the literature, it's clear that there is an absence of common definitions about what strategy is, and to go deeper, to discuss how grand strategy would operate as a process. It seems every author has to provide fresh definitions and new mental models to improve how they convey their understanding of the art of strategy development. In fact, this author will introduce a grand strategy model in the final chapter of this paper.

³⁴ Daniel M. Gerstine, *Leading at the Speed of Light: New Strategies for U.S. Security in the Information Age*, (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2006), 32.

The basic model to discuss strategic theory or strategic art is the “ends, ways, and means” concept. It may sound too basic to address, but it’s essential to understand the basic vocabulary that defines strategic concepts from the tactical to grand strategy level. Strategy is “the formulation, coordination, and application of ends (objectives), ways (courses of action), and means (supporting resources) to promote and defend national interest.”³⁵ When friction between the desired ends and available means occurs, decision makers must assess the risk such a strategy may be to overall interests.³⁶ Some form of this basic ends, ways, means, and risk framework is used in most strategic theories and will be used throughout this paper.

Lykke U.S. Army War College (USAWC) Strategy Model

Arthur F. Lykke wrote a succinct five-page article as a basic primer for understanding strategy. The article, “Toward an Understanding of Military Strategy,” recounts a lecture at the USAWC by General Maxwell D. Taylor that defined strategy as outlined below:

Strategy = Ends + Ways + Means .	
<i>Component</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Ends	Objectives towards which one strives
Ways	Course of action
Means	Instruments by which some end can be achieved

Figure 2³⁷

In Figure 1, ends, ways and means are defined in very similarly to Chilcoat’s definition above. Lykke’s genius was adding to the body of knowledge by using the three legged

³⁵ Richard Chilcoat, “Strategic Art: New Discipline for 21st Century Leaders” Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College, October 1995.

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/Pubs/display.cfm?pubID=285> (accessed 21 March, 2009)

³⁶ P.H Liotta. and Richmond M. Lloyd, “The Strategy and Force Planning Framework,” in *Strategy and Force Planning, Fourth Edition*, (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2004), 5.

³⁷ Arthur F. Lykke, Jr., “Toward and Understanding of Military Strategy.” In *U.S. Army War College Guide to Strategy*, edited by Joseph R. Cerami and James F. Holcomb, Jr. (February 2001). <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/army-usawc/strategy/> (accessed April 5, 2009), 179.

stool mental model in Figure 2. Mentally conceiving the importance of balance among ends, ways, and means is a helpful concept. The simple analogy is that ends (objectives), ways (concepts), and means (resources) must be balanced or risk to national security increases.³⁸ While this was delivered as a model for military strategy, it has application at all levels of strategy, specifically grand strategy. The concept of balance displayed in this model has utility when later thinking about grand strategy. Lykke's model has been tested thousands of times in historical and current strategic analysis. His theory of strategy is an important contribution to understanding strategy because it reinforces the common language of ends, ways, and means then emphasizes balance and risk to evaluate strategy at any level.³⁹

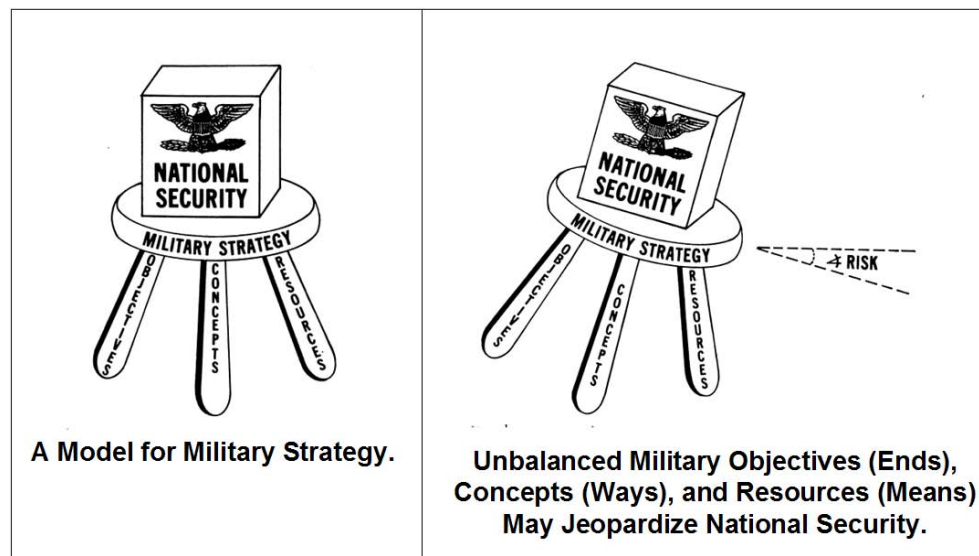


Figure 3⁴⁰

Bartlett's Model of Strategic Development – “The Bartlett Donut”

The Bartlett model is a mental model to aid conceptualization of how strategy is developed (Figure 3). It includes the ends, ways (in this model labeled ‘strategy’), means,

³⁸ Arthur F. Lykke Jr., “Toward and Understanding of Military Strategy,” 182-183.

³⁹ H. Richard Yarger, “Towards A Theory of Strategy: Art Lykke and the Army War College Strategy Model,” <http://dde.carlisle.army.mil/authors/stratpap.htm> (accessed April 19, 2009)

⁴⁰ Arthur F. Lykke Jr., “Toward and Understanding of Military Strategy,” 182-183.

and risk language familiar from the Lykke model, but it highlights how the strategy formulation can be described as a continual or cyclical process. It demonstrates how the strategy process is influenced by external factors such as the security environment and resources.⁴¹ This section highlights these factors with the goal of adding the use of a cyclical model to understanding the complexity of grand strategy development.

The *security environment* includes the all aspects of global affairs including international politics, demographic changes, and cultural, ethnic, and religious conflict.⁴²

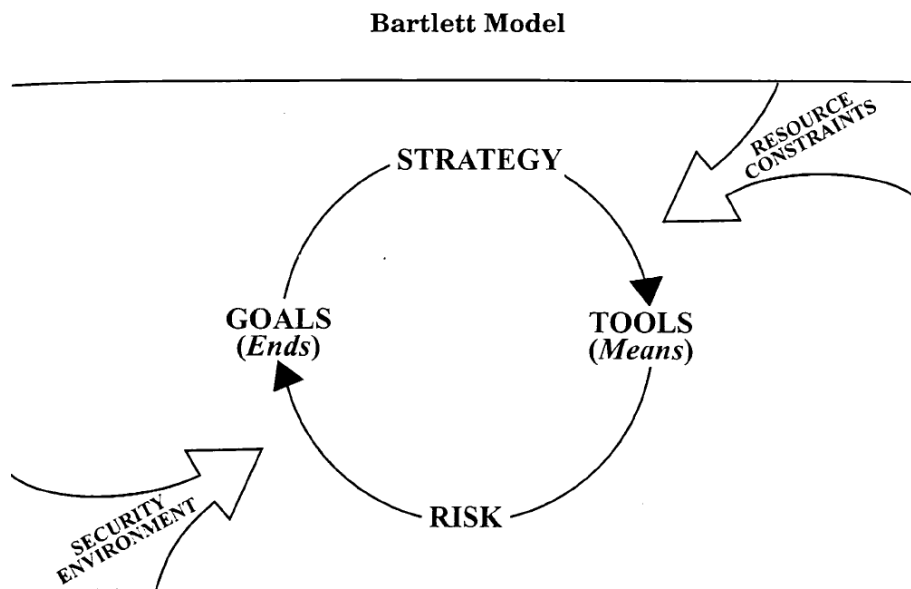


Figure 4⁴³

The Bartlett Model illustrates the continual effect of understanding how nations, cultures, religions, and economies interact on the global stage and act as a variable to influence strategy formulation or development.

The other variable Bartlett introduces is *resource constraints* and its continual influence on strategy development. Because all government resources are limited; the

⁴¹ Henry C. Bartlett, G.Paul Holman, Jr., and Timothy E. Somes, "The Art of Strategy and Force Planning," In *Strategy and Force Planning*, 18.

⁴² Henry C. Bartlett, "The Art of Strategy and Force Planning," 18.

⁴³ Henry C. Bartlett, "The Art of Strategy and Force Planning," 19.

strategist must consider ends, ways, means, and risks in the realm of what is financially feasible at the national level. He must consider all the demands on the national purse when determining how ways and means will be applied to achieve ends. This becomes even more critical when formulating grand strategy because resources committed to a strategy will be supported by means that are funded from multiple departments or agencies. This in turn has the potential for risk to develop not by an out of balance ends and ways, but by friction in the administration of government resources not synchronized or coordinated across all government departments.

In this model, Bartlett identifies that the process of examining “security environment, goals, strategy, available resources, and tools” in a continuous, iterative process. Risk in this model focuses on the uncertainty and negative outcomes as a result of mismatches among the key variables. “The single most important value of risk assessment is that it results in a constant effort to identify and correct imbalances among key variables.”⁴⁴

Yarger Comprehensiveness of Strategy Model

Harry R. Yarger, Professor of National Security Policy, USAWC developed a model of how the levels of war match up with the hierarchy of strategy documents (Figure 4). This model illustrates the umbrella effect intended in definitions that grand strategy should cover all national aspects of war making. The model also shows the hierarchical nature of U.S. strategy documents and that they are nested, each document below the NSS supporting the objectives of the higher document.

Yarger defines strategy as hierarchical, flowing from the top down. National leaders control national power through strategy. “Strategy originates at the top as a

⁴⁴ Henry C. Bartlett, “The Art of Strategy and Force Planning,” 21.

consequence of grand strategy...grand or national security strategies lay our broad objectives and directions for the use of all the instruments of power.”⁴⁵



Figure 5⁴⁶

The key to comprehending the importance of this hierarchy is that key elements in subordinate strategies are informed by higher strategies. In other words, the ends, ways, means, and risk articulated in grand strategy is reflected in National Security Strategy, then in turn, National Defense Strategy and on down through subordinate strategies.

The comprehensiveness of strategy model (Figure 5) conveys the holistic nature of strategy. Its essence is that strategy cannot be developed in isolation. First the strategist must understand the international (external) and domestic environment and how it continually affects all levels of strategy. Second, strategists need to understand the effects of their own choices and the efforts of those above and below and in different departments of government at their same level. Finally, strategists must coordinate their efforts with those senior and subordinate to ensure conflicts in concept are eliminated.

⁴⁵ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional: Strategic Thinking and Strategy Formulation in the 21st Century*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008), 21.

⁴⁶ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 22.

This is no easy task when considering there is no central planning process for whole of government.⁴⁷

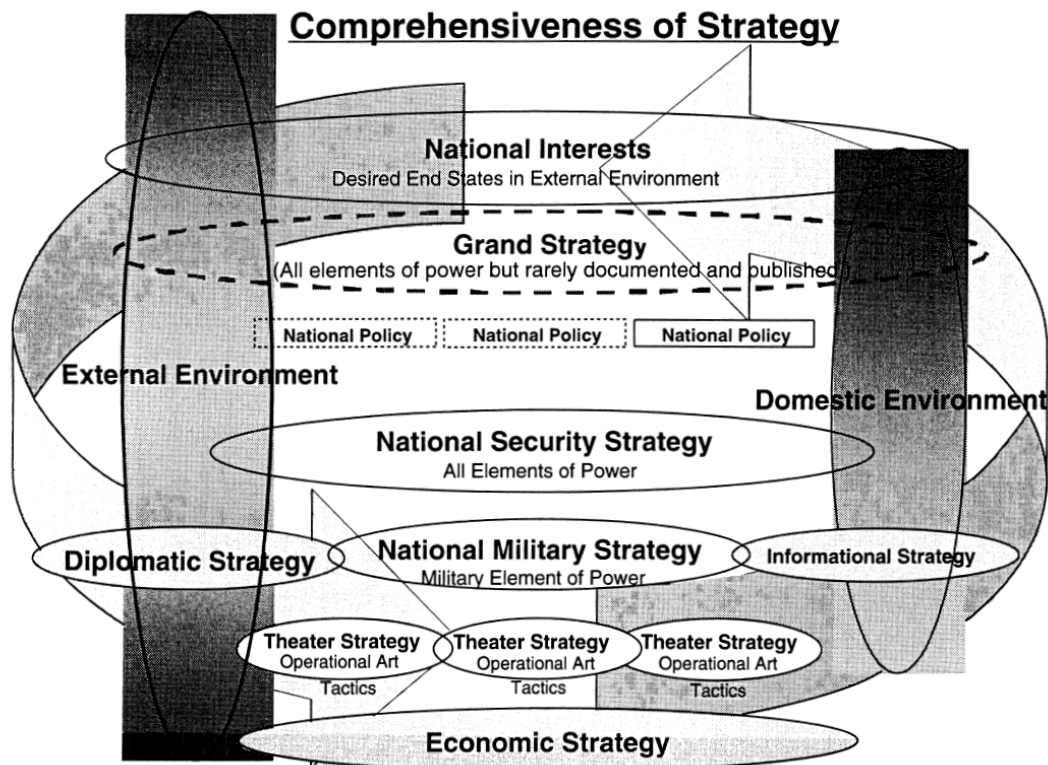


Figure 6⁴⁸

One of the key takeaways from this model, is the concept that grand strategy is grown from national interests with regard to desired end states in the international environment. It also illustrates that grand strategy informs national policy, and in turn policy informs a national security strategy which support lower level strategies.

USAWC Strategy Formulation Model

The next model is the 2004 USAWC Strategy Formulation Model (Figure 6). The greatest benefit of this model is that it expands the understanding of the ingredients that go into the development of grand strategy. It begins with *national purpose* which is the

⁴⁷ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 19.

⁴⁸ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 19.

collection of enduring values and beliefs. The model identifies three core *national interests*: physical security, promotion of values, and economic prosperity. The process

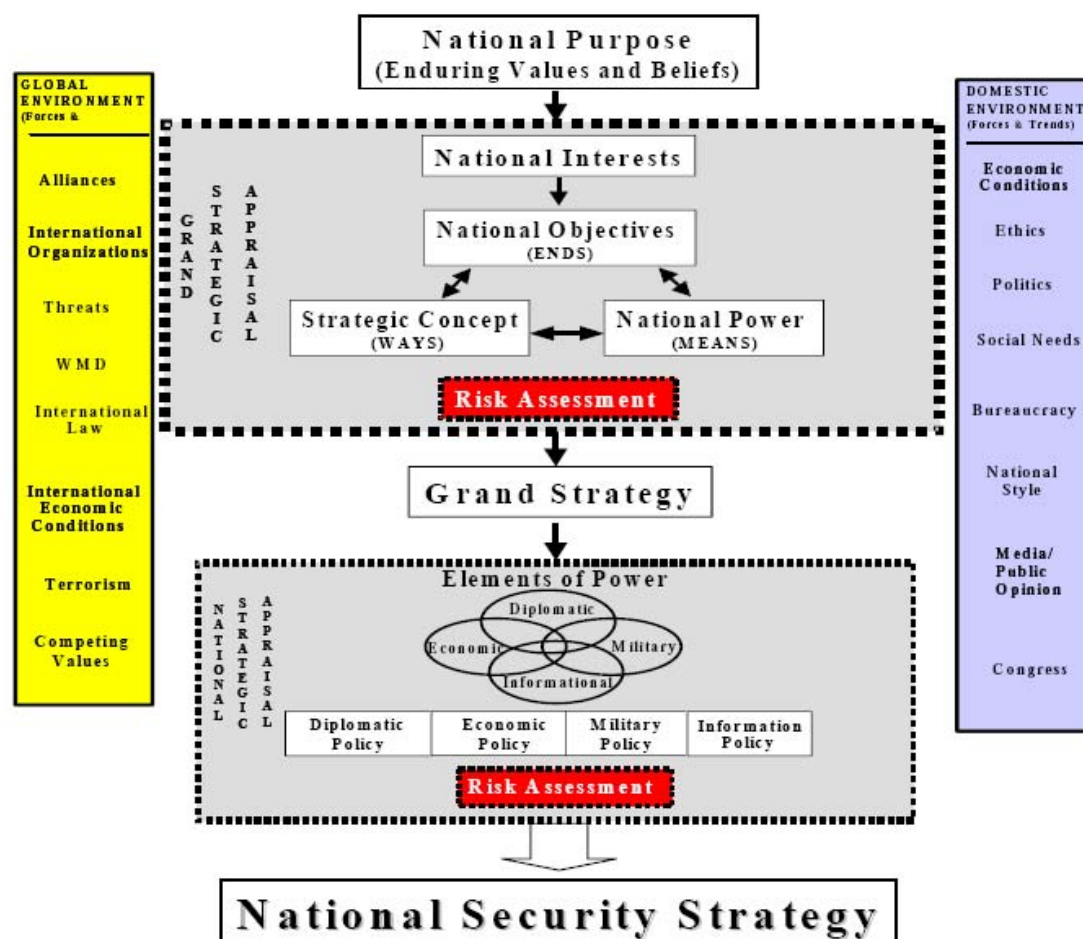


Figure 7⁴⁹

consists of an appraisal using ends, ways, and means informed by the national purpose and interests while considering the global and domestic environment. The outcome of the appraisal is a grand strategy which then informs policy. This mental model begins to break down what happens at a grand strategic level of strategic analysis or in this case appraisal.

⁴⁹ J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr. (editor), "Appendix I: U.S. Army War College Guidelines for Strategy Formulation," *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Policy and Strategy*, (July 2004) <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/army-usawc/strategy2004/index.htm> (accessed April 13, 2009), 279.

Cunningham Linear Strategic Framework Models⁵⁰

Dr. Chuck Cunningham, Professor at the Joint Forces Staff College and the Strategic Studies Chair at the Joint Advanced Warfighting School provides this model for discussion. The intent of this model is to highlight simple variables with regard to the nexus of strategy or grand strategy and force planning. Each of these strategic framework models are described below as numbered.

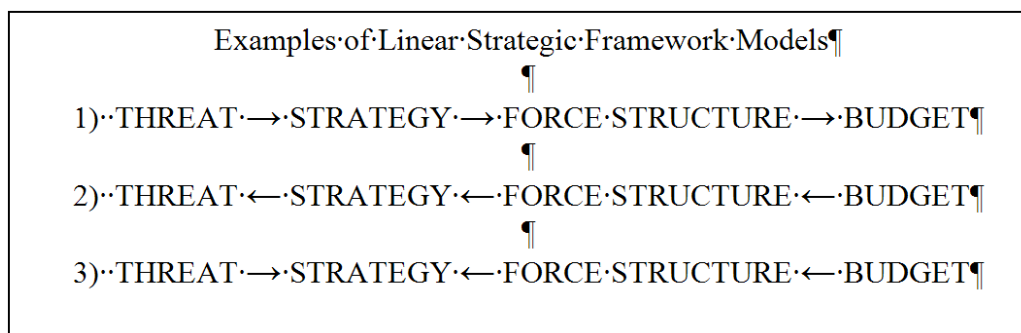


Figure 8

Framework 1: In this situation the THREAT is identified and understood, it drives a STRATEGY developed to counter the threat, a FORCE STRUCTURE is procured, and the BUDGET grows or is able to absorb the cost. This is a world of national supremacy with unlimited resources. If conditions like this ever existed the risk for failure would be low. This seems on the surface to be an ideal situation; however, there is an insidious aspect to this framework. First, there is no room for error in assessing the manageability of the threat. Second, if a nation perceived or began operating in this framework, and there were subsequent changes to the threat or availability of the budget monies, then risk levels could quickly rise. This linear framework is a good model for thinking about resources. In this case resources are abundant and the strategists that come up with the ideal solution will be rewarded because the coffers are full.

⁵⁰ All of the information from this section from class notes and an unpublished handout provided by Dr. Chuck Cunningham, March 11 2009.

Framework 2: In this situation the BUDGET is fixed and the share that goes to FORCE STRUCTURE is fixed and a force is built from the funds available. A STRATEGY is developed to mitigate the THREATS as they are perceived. This is a world where other priorities drive the budget process and the ability to adjust strategic ways is inhibited by policy or process. In this situation, the STRATEGY process would determine the desired ends and apply the means required from the forces available. The problem arises when the strategist realizes that the forces required do not exist. In that case the strategist may succumb to redefining the threat, hoping the situation improves as it develops. Framework 2 can be a result of misjudging framework 1. While this is a viable approach to strategy, “redefining the threat to fit existing ends, ways and means is incompatible with responsible strategic thinking.” Again, this linear framework is a good model for thinking about resources. When the resources and force structure are fixed, there may be a tendency to fix the books or adjust the threat to not make it appear so dangerous.

Framework 3: This framework is the “strategists” framework. In this situation, the BUDGET has no room to grow and FORCE STRUCTURE is developed from the budget available as in Framework 2. The THREAT is honestly evaluated and either because of size or number of threats it transcends the BUDGET and FORCE STRUCTURE. The weight of effort falls on the STRATEGY or more specifically the strategist or planner to modify the ways from the means given to affect the ends desired. This is more like today’s operating environment and it’s a professional alternative to Framework 2. It requires the STRATEGY process to clearly articulate the variables in ends and risk (low, moderate, significant, or high) and push the information for leadership to accept the risk

or revise guidance. Finally, this linear framework is also a good model for thinking about resources. Especially in today's economic environment, resources are fixed, threats are dangerous and uncertain. The real benefit to thinking about strategy in this fashion is that it encourages critical thinking to create solutions or strategies to apply means and forces creatively to protect and pursue desired ends.

In conclusion, mental models together with definitions begin to clarify what strategy is and what grand strategy formulation does for a nation. The idea is to begin to match what grand strategy can do for a nation and what its absence would do for a nation. This chapter provided a review of key strategic models with the intent to provide a foundation to discuss strategy as a concept to begin to identify where grand strategy fits in strategy formulation. Moving into the next chapter, taking the understanding of what defines a grand strategy together with a concept of how grand strategy works for a nation. The next chapter will deconstruct the elements that go into a grand strategic development.

CHAPTER THREE

KEY COMPONENTS OF GRAND STRATEGY

“Strategy is about choices...we don’t teach it, we don’t recognize it, the Army doesn’t understand the difference between plans and strategy. When you ask specifically for strategy you get aspirations.”

—David Fastabend, 2009⁵¹

“...haziness about ends and means about what to do and how to do it is a mark of strategic ineptitude...”

—Eliot Cohen, 2009⁵²

This chapter examines in detail the key components at the heart of grand strategy. The survey of definitions outlined in chapter one illustrated how the definition of grand strategy has changed over time and how practitioners and scholars are unable to agree on what clearly defines the parameters of grand strategy. The strategic art models in chapter two provided a broad conceptual appreciation of the complexities surrounding strategic formulation. This chapter deconstructs the key components used in grand strategy formulation. It first examines components external to the process but with great influence—national interests, threats, and operating environment. Then it looks at components central to strategy formulation—national goals and objectives, national resources, and risk. In reviewing the literature on these components it quickly becomes clear that consensus continues to be elusive concerning what comprises each of these terms. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to gain an understanding of what each of these components bring to strategic formulation, specifically focused on grand strategy development. The desired outcome is to examine and appreciate the ingredients that are the essence of grand strategy development. It is also to illustrate the need for a clearly

⁵¹ Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2009), 14.

⁵² Ricks, 14.

defined process for developing and articulating grand strategy that would include conceptualizing the left and right parameters of the concepts and where possible offering clear definitions.

National Interests

The term national interest is surrounded in ambiguity. Most scholars write their own definition rather than accept a common reference. This does not encourage clear understanding or foster clear decision-making.⁵³ This section will compare definitions from literature to provide a ‘ball park’ reference for understanding the use of the term. Then, it examines examples provided by national documents and strategic thought scholars. Next, in order to focus strategic development, it is helpful to assign and justify a level of intensity to each interest. The importance of national interest to the strategic formulation is underscored by Robert Art, “the most fundamental task in devising a grand strategy is to determine a state’s national interests.”⁵⁴

Definitions

The most significant problem in reviewing the literature on national interests is that most authors want to list what they think national interests are and few really discuss how a national interest is defined. The DoD definition is a good place to start:

National security interests – The foundation for the development of valid national objectives that define US goals or purposes. National security interests include preserving US political identity, framework, and institutions; fostering economic well-being; and bolstering international order supporting the vital interests of the United States and its allies.⁵⁵

⁵³ Donald E. Nuechterlein, *America Recommitted: A Superpower Assesses Its Role in a Turbulent World – Second Edition* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2001), 12.

⁵⁴ Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America*, 45.

⁵⁵ JP 1-02, *online* (April 12 2001), as amended through October 17 2008, 371; and, *the printed and bound version*, April 12 2001, 287.

This definition can be divided into two distinct parts. First, it establishes that these *interests* are the foundation for developing *objectives* that define *goals* and *purposes*. One of the facets of complexity in understanding strategic development is the limits on the English language to differentiate how an author and reader communicates and interprets the parameters of a definition for what constitutes an *interest*, *objective*, *goal*, or *purpose*. The second part of the definition addresses three interests: (1) preserving political identity, framework and institutions; (2) fostering economic well-being; and (3) bolstering international order supporting vital interests of the U.S. and its allies.

Donald Nuechterlein's definition of national interest is "the perceived needs and desires of a sovereign state in relation to other sovereign states that constitute its external environment."⁵⁶ In other words these interests are that of the sovereign nation in relation to other nations; it limits a national interest to the nation state system. Yarger provides a generalized expansion of the Nuechterlein definition as, "the perceived needs and desires of a sovereign state in relation to other sovereign states, non-state actors, and chance and circumstances in an emerging strategic environment expressed as desired end-states." Yarger's definition broadens the concept to include multiple actors and adds the dynamic nature of the operating environment in which national interests must be considered. As a practical rule of thumb, national interests are generally stated without verbs or other action modifiers. Interests must be stated with an understandable degree of specificity. "Access to oil" or "freedom of navigation in the global common" could be acceptable examples.^{57,58} In order to add depth to these definitions look at the examples of national interests provided below.

⁵⁶ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 118

⁵⁷ Donald E. Nuechterlein, *America Recommitted*, 12-15.

Examples

National interests should be articulated clearly and specifically. The NSS has provided a good vehicle for expressing national interest. A review of how national interests have been defined and identified in the NSS will add depth to understanding this component of grand strategy. Ronald Reagan said that the first NSS “reflects our national interests and presents a broad plan for achieving the national objectives that support those interests.”⁵⁹ George H. W. Bush’s NSS declared the national interests as:

“The survival of the United States as a free and independent nation, with its fundamental values intact and its institutions and people secure...a healthy and growing U.S. economy to ensure opportunity for individual prosperity and resources for national endeavors at home and abroad...healthy, cooperative and politically vigorous relations with allies and friendly nations...(and) a stable and secure world where political and economic freedom, human rights, and democratic institutions flourish.”⁶⁰

W. J. Clinton’s first NSS declares the national interests as:

“...the nature of our response must depend on what best serves our own long-term national interests. Those interests are ultimately defined by our security requirements. Such requirements start with our physical defense and economic well-being. They also include environmental security as well as the security of our values achieved through expansion of the community of democratic nations.”⁶¹

George W. Bush’s first NSS linked values and interests together and declared:

“The U.S. national security strategy...reflects the union of our values and our national interests. The aim of this strategy is to help make the world not just safer but better. Our goals on the path to progress are clear: political and

⁵⁸ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 119.

⁵⁹ Donald E. Nuechterlein, *America Recommitted*, 12.

⁶⁰ National Security Strategy of the United States, August 1991.
<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/nss/nss-0891.htm> (accessed April 2 2009); P.H. Liotta and Richmond M. Lloyd, “The Strategy and Force Planning Framework,” 6-7.

⁶¹ National Security Strategy of the United States, February 1996.
<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/nss/nss-96.htm> (accessed April 2 2009); P.H. Liotta and Richmond M. Lloyd, “The Strategy and Force Planning Framework,” 6-7.

economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity...”⁶²

In reviewing actual national strategy documents, common trends are repeated through several Presidential administrations. The common national interests that emerged include national survival and security, economic growth and freedom, access to resources, and good relations with other states. Some scholars claim their research of this and other nations’ political history have allowed them to identify enduring national interests. This effort could be to limit the ambiguity of the topic and reduce variables in strategic formulation. Most importantly it offers the opportunity to evaluate how the definition has been used by experts as they justified their claims for their selection of specific national interests. A visual depiction of these interests is provided in Figure 9.

National Interests Compared		
USAWC	Donald Nuechterlein	Robert J Art
1. Security of the Homeland 2. Economic Well-Being 3. Promotion of Values	1. Defense of the Homeland 2. Economic Well-Being 3. Favorable World Order 4. Promotion of Values	1. Defense of the Homeland 2. Deep peace among the Eurasian great powers 3. Secure access to Persian Gulf oil at a stable, reasonable price 4. International economic openness 5. Consolidation of democracy and spread, and the observance of human rights 6. No severe climate change

Figure 9 – National Interests Compared

The USAWC identifies three core U.S. national interests “*physical security*, defined as the protection against attack on the territory and people of the United States in order to ensure survival with fundamental values and institutions intact; *promotion of values*; and *economic prosperity*.”⁶³

⁶² National Security Strategy of the United States, September 2002. http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/nss/nss_sep2002.pdf (accessed April 2 2009); P.H. Liotta and Richmond M. Lloyd, “The Strategy and Force Planning Framework,” 6-7.

⁶³ USAWC Appendix 1, 280.

Nuechterlein is recognized by many as an expert on U.S. national interests.⁶⁴ He developed a model that identifies four basic long term national interests to guide policy makers; they are listed in priority order. The first interest is *defense of the homeland*. The second interest is *economic well-being*. The third is *favorable world order*. The fourth is *promotion of values*.⁶⁵

Robert Art exhaustively details in his book, *A Grand Strategy for America*, how he researched historical records and data about U.S. strategy and policy documents and was able to consolidate the essence of national interests into six national interests. He identified six national interests suggesting these interests should drive and determine the direction of strategy and foreign policy development. The six interests are: (1) defense of the homeland; (2) Deep peace among the Eurasian great powers; (3) secure access to the Persian Gulf oil at a stable, reasonable price; (4) international economic openness; (5) Democracy's consolidation and spread, and the observance of human rights; (6) no severe climate change. He goes on to emphasize in his book that it is critical that national interests "must be carefully justified, not merely assumed" because of the critical role they play in strategy formulation.⁶⁶

This list of national interests is to provide a concept for understanding how the definition can be applied. It is not intended to endorse the lists above as an exclusive list. Other national interests can be justified and considered in strategic formulation because it is a dynamic environment.

Levels of Intensity

⁶⁴ Nearly every resource reviewed for this paper with specific reference to national interests referred to or compared their data with one of Donald E. Nuechterlein's books.

⁶⁵ Nuechterlein, Donald E., *Defiant Superpower: The New American Hegemony*. (Washington DC: Potomac Books Inc., 2005), 58-60.

⁶⁶ Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America*, 43, 45.

Once national interests are identified and justified an essential step is to assign a measure of importance or intensity to that interest. There are three reasons level of intensity needs to be accomplished. First, a level of intensity suggests a relative importance and sense of urgency among competing interests.⁶⁷ Second, it prioritizes with regard to resources committed to the interest including time and decision-maker attention.⁶⁸ Third, it assigns a weight of effort and risk acceptance implication.⁶⁹ There are two guidelines to consider when assessing and assigning level of intensity. One is the decision to act on a national interest does not come from the assignment of intensity it flows from the strategy formulation process.⁷⁰ The other is the level of intensity should be determined before detailed threat analysis is conducted. “If a government begins with a threat assessment before a conceptualization of interest intensity, it may react to a threat with major commitments and resources devoid of any rational linkage to that intensity.” The potential risk becomes making ‘the interest’ a function of the threat.⁷¹

As with other aspects of strategic components there are a multitude of definitions for level of intensity. In order to grasp the full depth of thought scholars have placed on this component it is necessary to compare various scholars’ writings.

The 1996 NSS provided the clearest guidance to inform lower level strategies and actions concerning the employment of the military in relation to national interests. The 1996 NSS clearly categorized or assigned levels of military involvement with regard to national interest. It also defined how military force would be employed in each category. The 1996 NSS included three levels of intensity: (1) VITAL—directly threaten the

⁶⁷ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 122; Robert Art, 45

⁶⁸ Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America*, 45

⁶⁹ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 122

⁷⁰ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 122

⁷¹ USAWC Appendix 1, 282

vitality and survival of the nation. Military force would be used decisively and unilaterally, if necessary. (2) IMPORTANT—does not affect our survival, but does affect our well being or the character of the world. Military forces would only be used if they advance U.S. interest and “the costs and risks of their employment are commensurate with the interests at stake and other means have been tried and have failed to achieve our objectives.” (3) HUMANITARIAN—clearly stated the military is not the best tool for humanitarian interests unless the level of relief and the lack of rule of law made it too difficult for the world to provide relief.⁷² This was clear guidance but so clear that it had the potential to over commit the military.

The USAWC defines the following levels of intensity:

“VITAL—if unfulfilled, will have immediate consequences for core national interests.

IMPORTANT—if unfulfilled, will result in damage that will eventually affect core national interests.

PERIPHERAL—if unfulfilled, will result in damage that is unlikely to affect core national interests.”⁷³

Yarger is similar but provides some refinement:

“SURVIVAL—if unfulfilled will result in immediate massive destruction of one or more major aspects of the core national objectives.

VITAL—if unfulfilled, will have immediate consequence for core national interest.

IMPORTANT—if unfulfilled, will result in damage that will eventually affect core national interests.

PERIPHERAL—if unfulfilled, will result in damage that is unlikely to affect core national interests.”⁷⁴

Nuechterlein uses his levels of intensity in evaluating national interests in a specific model using a matrix that evaluates specific problems and players against his

⁷² National Security Strategy of the United States, February 1996.
<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/nss/nss-96.htm> (accessed April 2 2009)

⁷³ USAWC Appendix 1, 282.

⁷⁴ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 121-122.

four specific national interests outlined earlier in this chapter. Reviewing his depth of thought on the levels of intensity is still valuable.

“SURVIVAL (critical)—interests are rare and are relatively easy to identify. A survival interest is at stake when there is an imminent, credible threat of massive destruction to the homeland, physical existence of a country is in jeopardy due to attack or threat of attack.

VITAL (dangerous)—interest differs from a survival one principally in the amount of time a country has to decide how it will respond to an external threat where serious harm to the nation would result unless strong measures, including the use of force, are employed to protect the interest.

MAJOR (serious)—interest is one that a country considers to be important not crucial to its well-being. Major interests involve issues and trends, whether they are economic, political, or ideological, that can be negotiated with an adversary. Such issues may cause serious concern and even harm to U.S. interests abroad, but policymakers usually come to the conclusion that negotiation and compromise, rather than confrontation, are desirable—even though the result may be painful.

PERIPHERAL (bothersome)—interest is one that does not seriously affect the well-being of the United States as a whole, even though it may be detrimental to the private interest of Americans conducting business abroad these are situations where some national interest is involved but where the country as a whole is not particularly affected by any given outcome or the impact is negligible.”⁷⁵

One of the most concise scholars on the subject of level of intensity is Robert Art.

He clearly and succinctly, reminiscent of the 1996 NSS, provides both a level of intensity and role of military in his definitions.

“VITAL—one that is essential and, if not achieved, will bring cost that are catastrophic or nearly so. Security is the one vital interest of a state; it means protection of the state’s homeland from attack, invasion, conquest, and destruction. American military power can directly advance vital interest.

HIGHLY IMPORTANT—one that, if achieved, brings great benefits to a state and, if denied, carries costs that are severe but not catastrophic.

American military power can directly advance highly important interest.

IMPORTANT—one that increases a nation’s economic well-being and perhaps its security, and that contributes more generally to making the international environment more congenial to its interests, but whose

⁷⁵ Nuechterlein, *America Recommitted*, 17-20; Drew and Snow, *Making Twenty-First Century Strategy*, 32-34.

potential value or loss is moderate, not great. American military power can only indirectly advance important interest.”⁷⁶

Levels of Intensity Compared				
1996 NSS	USAWC	Nuechterlein	Robert J. Art	Harry R Yarger
Vital Important Humanitarian	Vital Important Peripheral	Survival Vital Major Peripheral	Vital Highly Important Important	Survival Vital Important Peripheral

Figure 10 – National Interest Levels of Intensity Compared

Getting the national interest right is a key ingredient to grand strategy formulation. National interests are the foundation on which strategy formulation must stand. If the foundation is not solid, the strategy runs great risk of not producing the desired ends. National interests are enduring. National interests are what a nation pursues and defends and what the citizens of that nation are willing to fight and die for. National interests are unlikely to change over time. “National interests reflect the identity of a people...national interests constitute little more than a broad set of often abstract guidelines that allow a nation to function the way it believes it should function.”⁷⁷ National leaders have struggled for years over the essential question of “what are we willing to die for?” Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger in 1984 made it the number one precondition, in what became known as the Weinberger Doctrine, to commit troops to war a “vital national interest had to be at risk.”⁷⁸ This is one of the key reasons a clearly defined process for developing and articulating grand strategy must be adopted.

Threats and the Contemporary Environment

The security environment or external environment and the threats they contain is extremely complex. In order to clearly define a process for developing and articulating grand strategy one must consider the threats and the nature of the environment.

⁷⁶ Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America*, 45-46.

⁷⁷ Liotta, P.H., “To Die For: National Interests and the Nature of Strategy,” In *Strategy and Force Planning*, 112-114.

⁷⁸ Drew and Snow; *Making Twenty-First Century Strategy*, 119.

Therefore, the intent of this section is to provide a definition for context followed by examples for depth of understanding.

Threats

Traditional threat assessment that evaluates a nation's or other actor's capability, intentions and circumstances as well as vulnerability analysis is important. Predicting the plans and intentions of a potential adversary has direct affects on strategy formulation.

Surprisingly little changed over the last thirteen years in the U.S. threat list. Few new threats have appeared and few have disappeared. The perceived severity may have changed since 9/11, but essentially the same challenges appear in some form in almost all of the lists in Figure 11.

1996 National Security Strategy, 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rogue states • Ethnic conflict, state failure • Proliferation • Peer emergence • Terrorism • Transnational crime 	2002 National Security Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terrorism • Rogue States • Regional crises
2001 Quadrennial Defense Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proliferation • Regional powers (esp. Asia) • State failure • Terrorism • Transnational crime 	2005 National Defense Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irregular • Catastrophic • Disruptive • Traditional

Figure 11 – Threat Comparison from Five Strategic Documents⁷⁹

Of note, the vocabulary changed in the 2005 NDS. The DoD began using a “quad chart” as a tool for specifying and analyzing threats. However, the threats did not change from the previous three lists.

The irregular warfare threat does require special mention. The U.S. has been fully engaged in two irregular wars for the last six years. This type of war will continue to effect our future for years to come. The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command

⁷⁹ Stephen D. Biddle, “American Grand Strategy After 9/11: An Assessment,” April 2005, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/PUB603.pdf> (accessed December 7 2008), 4.

published TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5-500, *The U.S. Army Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design* in January 2008. It outlines the complexity of accurately assessing the threat in an irregular warfare fight. It adds clarity to appreciating the threat today and tomorrow.

‘The complexity of warfare in the early twenty-first century poses special challenges to the U.S...this type of war was the most dangerous threat to our Nation’s survival...These are conflicts in which some or all of the participants are irregulars and military operations cannot deliver a conclusive political result. Rather, political and military activities intermingle throughout these conflicts...In some cases, the people themselves are the adversary or the objective—or both. The Internet and cable television shape the perceptions of a global audience in near real time. Every action conveys a message, and the interpretation of that message often varies from one audience to another in unintended and unpredictable ways. In such a conflict, adversaries still seek to establish favorable political and social conditions. However, rather than the firm absolute objectives that political leaders traditionally resolved in treaties, these conditions are malleable, requiring acceptance by individuals and societies. As a consequence, campaigns in the future will be prolonged and have dynamics more complex than those of traditional nation state wars...As these conflicts are inherently more complex than traditional state-based warfare, they demand a different way of thinking.’⁸⁰

Contemporary Environment

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger summarized the complexity of the current operating environment. He wrote, “(in) a world in which the sole superpower is a proponent of the prerogatives of the traditional nation-state, where Europe is stuck in halfway status, where the Middle East does not fit the nation-state model and faces a religiously motivated revolution, and where the nations of South and East Asia practice the balance of power, what is the nature of the international order that can accommodate

⁸⁰ TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5-500, *The U.S. Army Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design*, Department of the Army, Headquarters, United States Army, Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, VA: 28 January 2008, 4.

these different perspectives?”⁸¹ Kissinger did not offer an answer, but an answer is—to the best of the nation’s ability—attempt to understand this complex operating environment and the U.S. role in the world. Assessing the contemporary environment or strategic environment is about understanding “shifting international power centers, dominant trends, critical uncertainties, evolving economic interdependence, changing domestic requirements, cultural, religious, and demographic trends, ethnic warfare, ecological challenges, and advancing technology.”⁸² Needless to say, that’s a tall order, but a necessary function to be successful at developing strategy. It would be great if all those issues above remained static in time and space but they don’t. The international environment possesses a characteristic identified as volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA). In a physical and dynamic system that is unpredictable and connected—attempting to comprehend the friction and chaos between systems poses a significant challenge to strategic thinking. VUCA gives an acronym to the problem, but does not solve it.⁸³

Robert Art synthesized five features of the contemporary environment that he believes have the greatest significance for America’s national interests. They help frame the complexity of today’s operating environment. The five features are:

“(1) the absence of a peer state military competitor; (2) the rise of grand terrorism; (3) the deepening economic interdependence among Western Europe, North America, and Japan and, through the forces of globalization, the gradual incorporation of some Third World states into this interdependent arena; (4) the growing appeal and expansion of democratic governance beyond the core zone of Western Europe, North America and Japan; (5) and the continuing degradation of

⁸¹ Shawn Brimley, and Michèle A. Flournoy, “Introduction,” In *Finding Our Way: Debating American Grand Strategy*, Edited by Michèle A. Flournoy and Shawn Brimley (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, June 2008), 5-6.

⁸² Henry C. Bartlett, “The Art of Strategy and Force Planning,” 18.

⁸³ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 78.

the global environment, especially the increase in global warming and the threat of climate change associated with it.”⁸⁴

The feature Robert Art identifies above is a tool he used to link what he believes are America’s five national interests mentioned earlier. They do not include all contemporary features in world politics. The following list of phenomena and potential future developments can be categorized under those five features and are valuable in conceptualizing the effects of environment on strategy development or formulation.

“the collapse or breakup of states, through the outbreak of savage ethnic warfare or through the sheer incompetence of governments (“failed states”); the large and growing number of transnational and non-governmental organizations of both the malignant variety (such as international drug cartels, organized crime organizations, or terrorist organizations) and the benign variety (such as Amnesty International, the Red Cross); the rise of religious fundamentalism, especially Islamic fundamentalism; the unprecedented rise in forced migration and international refugees; the prospect of a doubling in the world’s population by the year 2015; the rapid economic development of China and its potential to become a superpower sometime in the first half of the twenty-first century; the computerization of global communications; the prospect that Russia might revert to totalitarian state or decay into a fascist one; and Europe’s creation of a single currency and central bank and its continuing efforts to achieve greater political integration.”⁸⁵

Strategy developed today is employed in the future. In order to conceive what that future may look like DoD provides two resources to provide operating environment awareness for strategy formulation. “In a rational world, strategists would first assess the international security environment in terms of shifting power centers, dominant trends, and critical uncertainties; then they would articulate specific national ends or objectives.”⁸⁶ There are two excellent resources for grasping the associated complexities of the common operating environment and were both published in November 2008. The first is *The 2008 Joint Operating Environment (The JOE)* published by Joint Forces

⁸⁴ Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America*, 12.

⁸⁵ Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America*, 12.

⁸⁶ Henry C. Bartlett, “The Art of Strategy and Force Planning,” 21.

Command. General J.N. Mattis, USMC, Commander Joint Forces Command, declares the purpose of *The JOE* is to “guide future concept development.” He emphasizes that *The JOE* is historically based and forward looking, but cautions that the future is unpredictable and that this study should be used to help inform how to solve future problems.⁸⁷ The second resource is *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World*, published by the National Intelligence Council. Mr C. Thomas Finger, Chairman, National Intelligence Council identifies the purpose of *Global Trends 2025* is “to stimulate strategic thinking about the future.” It includes, “key trends, the factors that drive them, where they seem to be headed, and how they might interact.” Unique to this document is the inclusion of global scenarios to provide deeper conceptualization for future decision makers.⁸⁸ These two resources are not part of Bartlett’s Model but are mentioned to illustrate how to identify the multitude of aspects associated when considering future strategic environment as a variable. Strategy is future focused; it is where strategy has its effect.⁸⁹

National Objectives

National objectives (ends) are central to the strategy process. Objectives may sometimes be referred to as aims, goals, and end-states across literature. This section examines how national objectives are defined and provides some observations about national objectives. It will also develop a respect for the dynamic nature of objectives in strategy formulation.

Definition

⁸⁷ United States Joint Forces Command, “The Joint Operating Environment (JOE),” Suffolk, VA, November 25 2008, iv.

⁸⁸ National Intelligence Council, “Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World,” Washington DC, November 2008, forward.

⁸⁹ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 42.

“National objectives explain the “what” is to be accomplished.” It’s critical to get the objectives right. National objectives must be developed in context of national interest and the contemporary environment. There are some key characteristics to good national objectives. First, national objectives are written using specific verbs (for example, protect economic lines of communication, eliminate WMD capability.) Specific and definitive verbs shape and qualify what is to be accomplished and frame the parameters for the use of power. Second, national objectives must be developed with full situational awareness; knowledge of the desired strategic end state, understanding of the nature of the environment, and the effects of other objectives. Third, national objectives need to be evaluated to ensure the scope is neither too narrow nor too broad; they should be flexible and adaptable. Fourth, be reluctant to accept planning-level objectives elevated to the strategic level. Beware of shortcuts to thinking. Fifth, national objectives serve the strategic end-state.⁹⁰

Observations

Getting the objectives right is a natural catalyst for building national consensus. If objectives are ill defined, inconsistent, or unsupported by some degree of national consensus, then the situation becomes exceedingly difficult. In fact it could be the reason the U.S. has been without a clearly defined and articulated comprehensive grand strategy since the end of the cold war—because of the failure to clearly define and articulate national objectives that generate their own consensus.⁹¹

As mentioned earlier, national interests are the highest level of abstraction and do not vary tremendously from administration to administration. National objectives tend to

⁹⁰ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional* 140-141; Drew and Snow, 14-17.

⁹¹ Drew and Snow; *Making Twenty-First Century Strategy*, 14.

vary with each administration. According to Liotta and Lloyd, in 2001 based on campaign rhetoric, if Presidential candidate Al Gore were elected his administration would likely not have pushed for national missile defense as aggressively as the Bush administration did after coming into office. The two administrations would have very different national objectives; their national interests would have almost been identical.⁹²

The 2002 and 2006 NSS provide excellent examples of national objectives. It is key to note the first eight objectives below were in both the 2002 and 2006 NSS, while the ninth was only in the 2006 NSS:

- “1. Champion aspirations for human dignity;
2. Strengthen alliances to defeat global terrorism and work to prevent attacks against us and our friends;
3. Work with others to defuse regional conflicts;
4. Prevent our enemies from threatening us, our allies, and our friends with weapons of mass destruction (WMD);
5. Ignite a new era of global economic growth through free markets and free trade;
6. Expand the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy;
7. Develop agendas for cooperative action with other main centers of global power;
8. Transform America’s national security institutions to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century; and
9. Engage the opportunities and confront the challenges of globalization.”⁹³

An essential observation to reinforce the process is to highlight that each of these national objectives above begin with an “explicit” verb.

Successful strategy formulation centers around taking the time to develop clearly defined and articulated national objectives. It requires the ability to think through all the

⁹² P.H. Liotta and Richmond M. Lloyd, “The Strategy and Force Planning Framework,” 7-8.

⁹³ National Security Strategy of the United States, September 2002. http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/nss/nss_sep2002.pdf (accessed April 2 2009); and National Security Strategy of the United States, March 2006. http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/nss/nss_mar2006.pdf (accessed April 2 2009)

complexities and yet state the objective as to create consensus in the statement.

Depending on the external environment it may be easy as during the Cold War.

Resources

As with any entity trying to manage resources “wants” almost always exceed resources. The challenge with developing resources to support a nation’s grand strategy is clearly determining what is required as a “need” in order to support a way to an end. This section will look at what constitutes resources and resource allocation at the grand strategy level. And it will highlight two distinct philosophies on how those resources can be managed. The absence of a clear process in applying resources should become self actualizing.

At the strategy formulation level, resources or means determine what strategy or ways a nation can support to achieve the desired ends. Yarger defines resources as tangibles and intangibles. “Examples of tangible resources include forces, people, equipment, money, and facilities.” The continual problem with tangible resources is that they are expensive, use a good deal of capital, and are seldom available in the numbers desired or required when needed either because of lack of funding or competing demands. “Intangible resources include things like culture, national will, international goodwill, courage, intellect or even fanaticism.” While these are resources that can be used in a grand strategy, they are nebulous, difficult to task, and manage. National will in a democracy is critical, but it’s a resource that must be sustained instead of assumed as a reliable “given” in the resource storehouse.⁹⁴

Two levels of resource allocation need to be considered when thinking about grand strategy. The first is to consider the economic health of the nation. This discussion

⁹⁴ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 144-145.

would assess the economy with regard to “growth, employment, inflation, budget and trade deficits, and overall productivity of the economy.” This assessment would assist to inform decision makers about risk and options.⁹⁵ The second is to consider how the resources will be balanced between defense and other departments to support a grand strategy. It adds depth to the discussion of tangible and intangible mentioned above. This assesses means across instruments of power.

“Three basic sets of tools, economic instruments of power include trade agreements, foreign aid, money supply, taxes, government expenditures, and subsidies. Diplomatic means are alignments, ad hoc coalitions, alliances, international institutions, treaties, good offices, sanctions, and negotiations of every conceivable kind and complexity. Military instruments include the full array or armed might, from the capabilities for large scale conventional war, smaller contingencies, peacekeeping and nation building...”⁹⁶

The information instrument of power not only includes national leaders using the “bully pulpit,” but increasingly the use of internet and email.⁹⁷

There are numerous ways to justify how strategic means need are used in grand strategy. One concept is *demand driven* while the other is *supply driven*. This concept adds breadth to understand resource allocation to grand strategy.

Means that are demand driven are based on a known threat or vulnerability. When a nation adopts a demand driven strategy it invests in intelligence capability to accurately map an adversary’s capabilities. Then it invests in means to counter that known threat. That translates into first identifying the threat, then designing, building and fielding a means (or system) to counter the threat. This philosophy has a long time horizon and tends to be strategically focused. Some of the risks include long time for asset

⁹⁵ P.H. Liotta and Richmond M. Lloyd, “The Strategy and Force Planning Framework,” 9.

⁹⁶ Henry C. Bartlett, “The Art of Strategy and Force Planning,” 20.

⁹⁷ Henry C. Bartlett, “The Art of Strategy and Force Planning,” 20.

development, incorrectly assessing the enemy risk, or an unknown threat suddenly appearing.⁹⁸

Means that are supply driven are based on capability to counter most threats or be flexible to adjust to emerging threats. This is a “come as you are” capability. The basic concept is to assess the known threats and to some extent predict what the threats might be in the future then design, build, and field a flexible force that has a range of capabilities to support the grand strategy. These means are “plug and play,” when a new threat arises, the capability or means available will be used to counter the threat. This supply driven capability may require adopting a new way to employ it to make it effective. This philosophy has a short time horizon, is capabilities based, and tends to be more operationally focused.⁹⁹

During the last half of the last century, the nation primarily resourced the DoD using threat based or scenario based resource planning. Officially, the DoD “shifted from threat-based planning to the more conceptually challenging but operationally necessary process known as capabilities based planning.” While that briefs well, there are many competing entities for government money in resourcing the nation’s grand strategy.¹⁰⁰

A clear process for developing grand strategy would improve the efficiency of how the nation uses its limited resources to affect the outcome of a desired grand strategy. When a grand strategy is not clearly defined, then any seller of defense goods can attempt to justify the necessity of their ware. The self evident problem is that the government can ill afford to purchase all the wares being hawked to Congress.

Risk

⁹⁸ Henry C. Bartlett, “The Art of Strategy and Force Planning,” 23-24.

⁹⁹ Henry C. Bartlett, “The Art of Strategy and Force Planning,” 23-31.

¹⁰⁰ P.H. Liotta and Richmond M. Lloyd, “The Strategy and Force Planning Framework,” 10.

Risk is well illustrated in the Bartlett Donut, Figure 3 as well as Lykke's model, Figure 2. It is the gap between available means and desired ends. Risk assesses the balance between the known, unknown, and assumed. It gives an estimate of short-falls and consequences from failure to catastrophic success. In today's dynamic operating environment mission success may not be linear.¹⁰¹ Risk assessment involves reverse engineering ends, ways, and means proposals. It requires reviewing the entire process and highlighting limitations or shortfalls. The intent is to test proposals to develop alternatives that minimize risk to mission success and people. The ideal risk assessment highlights balance and imbalance associated with how ways are developed to link means to achieve ends. The decision for what constitutes acceptable risk levels lies with national leaders. Risk assessment is continual during the strategy formulation process.

Conclusion

This chapter deconstructed the components of grand strategy. The intent was to gain an understanding of what each of these items bring to formulating grand strategy. It highlighted concepts to gain awareness of the complexity of putting these tools together to develop strategy. It also gave depth to each component to understand how each might be used while emphasizing the necessity for a clear process to eliminate uncertainty in an uncertain operating environment.

¹⁰¹ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 147

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS USING A FOCUSED MODEL OF GRAND STRATEGY

“There are three enormous tasks strategic leaders have to get right: The first is to get the big ideas right. The second is to communicate the big ideas throughout the organization. The third is ensuring proper execution of those big ideas.”

—General David Petraeus, 2009¹⁰²

The last three chapters have highlighted the concepts and components that inform grand strategy. It is a complex and dynamic system that would benefit greatly by conforming to a clearly defined process for developing and articulating grand strategy.

This chapter will use an author generated model focused specifically on grand strategy formulation. The model is for illustrative purposes only to stimulate discussion about adopting a standard process to formulate grand strategy and to distribute that strategy to inform the whole of government with the intended purpose of facilitating all departments of government working toward the same strategic goals. Then the chapter examines the central issue of the necessity of written GSUS to improve the likelihood that all branches and departments of government focus their efforts toward a common goal.

U.S. Grand Strategy Focused Model

The purpose of this section is to bring together the concepts discussed in the previous chapters to inform a model to understanding how grand strategy should provide a clearly defined roadmap to take a nation from the reality of today to the desired future of tomorrow. In this model, grand strategy is formed at the very highest level of national government. The purpose of grand strategy is to provide a focus or unifying vision for

¹⁰² Ricks, 129.

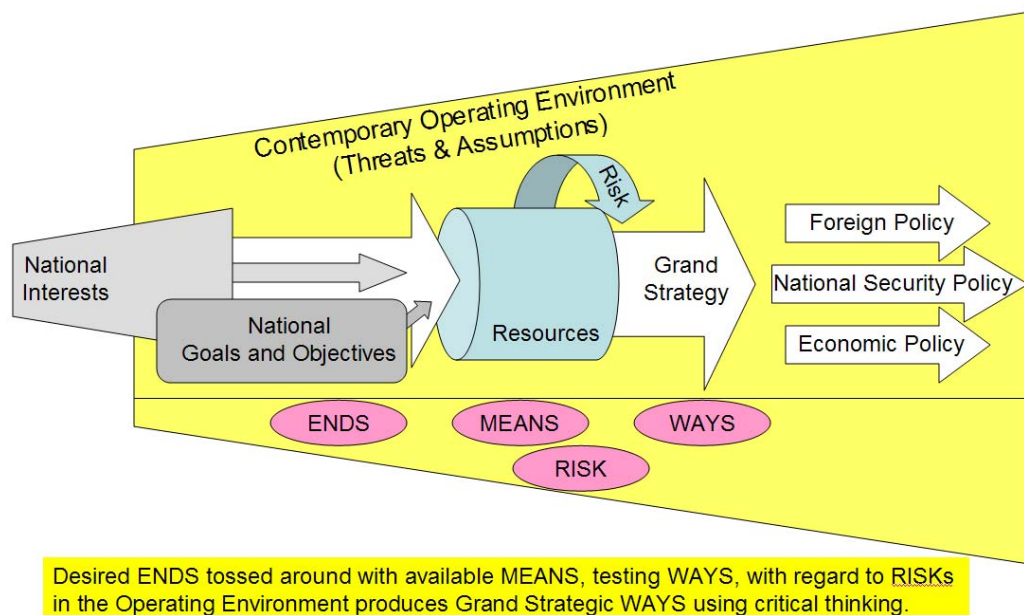


Figure 12 – U.S. Grand Strategy Focused Model

how the government should approach foreign policy, defense, and economic policy to further the interests of the nation. It enables all in government, and to some degree commercial industry, to work together toward a common future. The policy developed from a grand strategy would then inform focused diplomatic strategy, national security strategy, and economic strategy that would provide guidance to specific departments within government, but nested clearly under the unifying umbrella of a grand strategy.

In the Figure 12 model, all of the functions and processes exist influenced by the contemporary operating or strategic environment. “Policy, strategy and planning are all subordinate to the environment...strategy assumes that while the future cannot be predicted, the strategic environment can be studied, assessed, and to varying degrees, anticipated and manipulated.”¹⁰³ The goal is to understand the environment by identifying threats, trends, and opportunities to attempt to influence and shape future environments. Grand strategy is not about predicting the future, but about shaping the future by having

¹⁰³ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 16.

situational awareness of all actors on the world stage and making decisions to proactively influence the environment whenever possible to further national objectives.

In the model, the national interests are the only process that partially exists off the background of the contemporary operating environment. Yarger argues that, “interests are founded in national purpose...a summary of our enduring values, beliefs, and ethics as expressed by political leadership in regard to the present and the future they foresee.”¹⁰⁴ Part of national interests endures over time, not completely affected by current environment. America has an identity of being a role model for “an exceptional and model society.”¹⁰⁵ This identity goes back to John Winthrop’s call for settlers to “be a city upon a hill.” It flows throughout U.S. history from the Declaration of Independence, Preamble to the Constitution, the values of manifest destiny, Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points, and Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms.¹⁰⁶ Time and again, national security strategies reach back to these enduring principles. The authors of NSC 68 captured this ideal of national purpose as:

“The fundamental purpose of the United States is laid down in the Preamble to the Constitution: “...to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.” In essence, the fundamental purpose is to assure the integrity and vitality of our free society, which is founded upon the dignity and worth of the individual.

Three realities emerge as a consequence of this purpose: Our determination to maintain the essential elements of individual freedom, as set forth in the Constitution and Bill of Rights; our determination to create conditions under which our free and democratic system can live and prosper; and our determination to fight if necessary to defend our way of life, for which as in the Declaration of Independence, “with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine

¹⁰⁴ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 119.

¹⁰⁵ Offner, Arnold A., “Liberation or Dominance? The Ideology of U.S. National Security Policy,” In *The Long War: A New History of U.S. National Security Policy Since World War II*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 2.

¹⁰⁶ Offner, 2-3.

Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.”¹⁰⁷

Every NSS seems compelled to restate some aspect of national interests. This function should reside with the grand strategy. A grand strategy should capture these ideals from the national history. Once this was done it would require little editing over time, because these enduring national interests do not change significantly over time.

The Yarger model in Figure 5 describes national interests as “desired end states in external environment.”¹⁰⁸ In the Figure 12 model, national interests are separate from goals or end states, although some overlap occurs. Instead the national interests in this model are sustaining ideals of purpose and enduring interests that begin to funnel a foundation for desires that lead to and support goals and objectives. National goals and objectives are tools used by national leaders in strategic formulation to clearly define and articulate a vision for the strategy. Although grand strategy today isn’t a written or published document, these goals and objectives can be gleaned from speeches, especially during Presidential campaigns. It’s often what voters use to differentiate between candidates. It can be defined as the method or approach a future President may declare as to how they’ll guide the national resources to accomplish a desired goal. Most importantly, as defined in the previous chapter, it is critical to clearly state the national goals and objectives because it’s what the whole of government will use to focus their actions to the outcomes outlined in those goals.

In the model, resources are the funnel through which a strategy is really formed.

In the Cunningham model discussed earlier, a superpower world with unlimited

¹⁰⁷ NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security: A Report to the President Pursuant to the President's Directive of January 31, 1950, (April 14, 1950)
<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68-2.htm> (accessed January 17 2009)

¹⁰⁸ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 19.

resources, means would be developed as needed to counter threats. In the real world of limited resources, grand strategy in most cases has to adjust to fit the means available to accomplish the strategy. If a new threat or technology presents itself, it is possible for rapid development of a means to accomplish specific aspects of a strategy. The model depicts interests and objectives flowing into a rotating tube called resources. While the ends are being tossed around with means the process is continually assessing risk. This process may identify a real shortfall in capability that must be rapidly developed. This type of means acquisition is always costly and is usually justified because of extremely high risk. It is important in this model to realize it's a model developed in a period that ends may change some, but means are remaining relatively static. The key to effective strategy formulation in this model is the critical thinking that produces the grand strategy in the model, in effect, the ways to accomplish the ends with the fairly static resources available. The power in this model is the thinking that occurs in "ways" formulation.

"Risk is an assessment of the balance among what is known, assumed, and unknown...it is a measure of probability of success and failure, (as well as), the probable consequences of success and failure."¹⁰⁹ What's happening in the rotating tube of the model is the examination of the logic of fitting desired outcomes with available resources and employing them with a concept that becomes a grand strategy. Every time a method or way of employment of a strategy changes it must be analyzed for risk. And this all happens with awareness of the uncertain nature of environment. Risk may sometimes drive a shortfall in capability that must be developed. Means development is almost always expensive and justification is usually through risk assessment being critical to security or survival. Risk assessment for grand strategy is complex. It is not a linear

¹⁰⁹ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 147.

process; it is multivariable with complex reactive systems. It has to consider differing approaches and political philosophies that develop and apply grand strategy across government.¹¹⁰

Ways are the strategic concepts that form identifiable grand strategy. In this model, the ways are the central focus. In the past the way was often labeled with a name like *containment*, *mutually assured destruction*, or *forward defense*. It is essential to remember that grand strategies contain all elements of ends, ways, and means.¹¹¹ But in periods when means and ends are fairly static, the two key variables to success are in understanding the operating environment and using critical thinking to develop insightful and innovative ways to use the resources to achieve the desired ends.

Thinking about how grand strategy is formed is the purpose for the model described in Figure 12. If the U.S. needs a grand strategy, then it needs to be understood across all aspects of government. And the government should develop a process with common definitions and clearly outlined procedures for development of grand strategy.

Analysis of Issues in the Process

There are several diverse factors affecting the government adopting a clearly defined process for developing and articulating a grand strategy. This section will examine some of the issues and how they have affected the process.

Demand for a New Strategy – Since the end of the cold war, the nation has been searching for a way to define the world and the U.S. grand strategy to ensure its goals and interests are protected and pursued. Several worldviews were debated in the 1990's, but none of them were an adopted grand strategy. In 2001, Virginia Military Institute (VMI)

¹¹⁰ USAWC Appendix 1, 280-281.

¹¹¹ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 141.

Superintendent Josiah Bunting recognized the need for a forum to discuss grand strategy and the need for the U.S. to develop one for this time in U.S. history. He organized a two day conference held at the VMI campus in 2002. The conference resulted in a collection of nine essays from recognized strategic theorists being published in *The Obligation of Empire*, edited by James J. Hentz.¹¹² The conference acknowledged the decade-plus absence of a clear U.S. grand strategy and offered options for adopting specific grand strategies in the essays. This was not a new idea; it was an idea that began gathering steam. In 2004, Thomas P.M. Barnett published his first of three books that were a compilation of his thoughts on the how the world worked and a grand strategy for the U.S. The first book was, *The Pentagon's New Map*, a collection of ideas that had been the topics of numerous briefings he conducted for numerous military audiences.

In 2008, as the 2008 Presidential election campaigns were in full swing, two key events urged national adoption of a grand strategy for the U.S. One was the publishing of *Finding Our Way: Debating American Grand Strategy*, published by CNAS. It was a collection of essays on U.S. grand strategy, some updated from the VMI conference in 2002. The premise of the project was twofold. First, in the introduction the editors declare the failed strategy in Iraq was just a “microcosm of a more fundamental and consequential problem—the absence of a grand strategy.”¹¹³ Second, they wanted to draw inspiration from President Eisenhower’s 1953 Project Solarium, a “competitive strategy development process that questioned the basic assumptions of America’s global strategy

¹¹² James J. Hentz, (editor), *The Obligation of Empire: United States’ Grand Strategy for a New Century*. (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2004), vii-ix.

¹¹³ Shawn Brimley, and Michèle A. Flournoy, “Introduction,” In *Finding Our Way: Debating American Grand Strategy*, 5.

(in the Cold War).”¹¹⁴ In publishing *Finding Our Way*, CNAS wanted to stimulate debate and discourse about grand strategy. The authors wanted to challenge the new administration to “debate...what America’s grand strategy should be, (by assessing) three features: (1) a directive from the (new) President ordering a strategic review; (2) a competitive strategy process undertaken at the highest levels of government and (3) a subsequent National Security Review (NSR).” The suggested NSR would be a whole of government review similar to the Quadrennial Defense Review in the Department of Defense. It would ensure the whole of government was organized and resourced to meet the requirements of a U.S. grand strategy.¹¹⁵

The other key event in 2008 was a series of hearings called by Representative Ike Skelton, D-Mo, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC). The HASC hearings on American grand strategy included ten witnesses, from political leaders to strategic theorists, held over four months and five hearings. According to Chairman Skelton, “The U.S. suffers from the complete absence of a comprehensive strategy for advancing U.S. interests.” He went on to define comprehensive strategy as, “a commonly agreed upon description of critical U.S. interests and how to advance them using all elements of national power—economic, diplomatic and military.”¹¹⁶ In a later speech, he addressed the urgency of the need for a grand strategy. He said, “...major policies are inconsistent and contradictory in different areas of the world and across different policy realms. We suffer from a splintering of national power, which hinders our ability to

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Brimley, Shawn, Michèle A. Flournoy, “A Solarium for the Next Administration,” In *Finding Our Way: Debating American Grand Strategy*, 152.

¹¹⁶ Ike Skelton, Speech delivered on the floor of the House of Representatives July 9 2008, “U.S Needs Comprehensive Strategy to Advance National Interests,” http://armedservices.house.gov/list/press/armedsvc_dem/skeltonpr070908b.shtml (accessed January 20 2009)

address threats coherently and to reassure and cooperate with allies.”¹¹⁷ Chairman Skelton’s definition of comprehensive strategy is what this paper is defining as grand strategy. The purpose of the hearings was to raise awareness and facilitate debate on grand strategy. In December 2008, the results of the debates were combined and synthesized by Chairman Skelton. He published a list of eleven “defense challenges” the next administration must face. The number one challenge was “we must develop a clear strategy to guide national security policy.”¹¹⁸

The demand for a new or clearly articulated grand strategy is evident. The challenge is daunting, but it must be done. It cannot happen without first establishing a recognized process either through a “Solarium” type project or some Presidential decision or legislation.

Actors and Institutions Influencing Grand Strategy – It is worth examining how grand strategy formulation fits in the U.S. government processes. “Decisions about the content of grand strategy and the resources available to implement that strategy are products of political processes within the federal government.”¹¹⁹ The power to make grand strategy decisions is divided between two branches of government. The Constitution gives the executive branch significant power with regard to grand strategy. The President is the chief strategist. He is the commander and chief of the armed forces, is the authority to appoint ambassadors and negotiate treaties, and as head of state is the

¹¹⁷ Ike Skelton, Remarks of Congressman Ike Skelton (D-Mo) Chairman, House Armed Services Committee, Brookings Luncheon Seminar, July 31 2008, “Game Changers and the Military: Exploring Innovation and Leadership,” http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/events/2008/0731_military/0731_military_skelton.pdf (accessed January 20 2009)

¹¹⁸ Ike Skelton, “Congressman Ike Skelton’s list of top defense challenges facing the next administration,” December 15 2008, <http://www.examiner.com/x-1887-DC-Military-Community-Examiner~y2008m12d15-Congressman-Ike-Skeltons-list-of-top-defense-challenges-facing-the-next-administration> (accessed January 20 2009)

¹¹⁹ Drew and Snow, *Making Twenty-First Century Strategy*, 77-81.

only government authority that can recognize foreign governments.¹²⁰ The President also has the National Security Council (NSC) to manage executive branch policy. The NSC has its own institutional dynamic that grew during the Cold War. Today, it's well situated to manage an interagency, whole of government process to formulate and articulate grand strategy. The legislative branch has some ability to check that power. The key power is the "power of the purse." Congress controls the funding for grand strategy resources. Members of Congress also have authority to approve military promotions, Presidential appointments, and ratify treaties.¹²¹ The legislative branch can also enact laws that direct how the President must organize the executive branch of government. The GNA, as discussed in Chapter 3, mandated the annual report on national security strategy with the intent of helping ensure the government was matching ways with means.¹²² Special interest groups such as industry, veterans groups, and lobbyists also play a significant role in grand strategy development. Industry has a dominant role in what gets purchased by Congress. President Eisenhower presciently warned, "...we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist..."¹²³ The Constitution does not have a provision for controlling lobbyists and Eisenhower's warning was to the government and the people to keep watch so that personal economic gain driven by industrial greed did not drive grand strategy development. Politics and political power also have a role in influencing grand strategy. During the HASC hearings on grand strategy in 2008, Admiral Dennis Blair, USN (Ret),

¹²⁰ Drew and Snow, *Making Twenty-First Century Strategy*, 77-81.

¹²¹ Drew and Snow, *Making Twenty-First Century Strategy*, 90-92.

¹²² James L. Locher, III, "Goldwater-Nichols: Fighting the Decisive Battle," 46.

¹²³ Alex Roland, "The Military-Industrial Complex: Lobby and Trope," In *The Long War*, 336.

declared that one of the biggest problems facing the adoption of a post cold war strategy is politics. He argues that “competitive politics of the U.S. make political issues of foreign and defense policy and therefore grand strategy itself becomes political.” He argues that the four year election cycle and the continued absence of a clearly identifiable—enduring threat is the underlying reason the U.S. has not adopted a grand strategy.¹²⁴ There are numerous other players influencing grand strategy such as non-state actors and foreign governments and alliances. In the world today, where communication is nearly instantaneous, grand strategy can be influenced like never before by large entities as well as individuals.

Labeling Grand Strategies – The well known grand strategy period of containment has encouraged an expectation that a grand strategy should be easy to describe with a simple name. For a time Defense Strategies were labeled by their force sizing constructs such as “win-hold-win” or “1-4-2-1.” The problem is labeling strategy with simple monikers tends to limit the concepts. Because of the complexity of the grand strategic formulation environment it becomes necessary to attempt to categorize approaches or the ways to ease discussion and understanding for communicating a grand strategy. Labeling grand strategies isn’t a bad thing. It helps provide vocabulary to the discussion of how a strategy will be applied; it also gives vocabulary to categorize how politicians and theorists think a grand strategy could be employed. There are two key constructs that have been widely used. In a 1997, Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross

¹²⁴ Dennis C. Blair, Admiral U.S. Navy (retired), Testimony before the House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Armed Services, “A NEW U.S. GRAND STRATEGY”, 31 July 2008 , http://armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/OI073108/Blair_Testimony073108.pdf (accessed January 20 2009)

wrote an essay outlining four “Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy.” They define the four visions as follows:

“*Neo-isolationism* is the least ambitious, and, at least among foreign policy professionals, probably the least popular grand strategy option. The new isolationists have embraced a constricted view of U.S. national interests that renders internationalism not only unnecessary but counterproductive. National defense—the protection of “the security, liberty, and property of the American people”—is the only vital U.S. interest...

...*Selective engagement* endeavors to ensure peace among powers that have substantial industrial and military potential—the great powers. By virtue of the great military capabilities that would be brought into play, great power conflicts are much more dangerous to the United States than conflicts elsewhere. Thus Russia, the wealthier states of the European Union, the People’s Republic of China, and Japan matter most. The purpose of U.S. engagement should be to affect directly the propensity of these powers to go to war with one another. These wars have the greatest chance of producing large-scale resort to weapons of mass destruction...

...*Cooperative security*...begins with an expansive conception of U.S. interests: the United States has a huge national interest in world peace. Cooperative security is the only one of the four strategic alternatives that is informed by liberalism rather than realism. Advocates propose to act collectively, through international institutions as much as possible. They presume that democracies will find it easier to work together in cooperative security regimes than would states with less progressive domestic polities...

...*Primacy*, like selective engagement, is motivated by both power and peace...this strategy holds that only a preponderance of U.S. power ensures peace. The pre-Cold War practice of aggregating power through coalitions and alliances, which underlies selective engagement, is viewed as insufficient...both world order and national security require that the United States maintain the primacy with which it emerged from the Cold War. The collapse of bipolarity cannot be permitted to allow the emergence of multipolarity; unipolarity is best...”¹²⁵

The Posen and Ross categorization of grand strategic thought was used by CNAS in *Finding Our Way*. It provides a way to compare individual strategies. The goal of this paper is not to recommend or assess which is right but to offer that categorization is essential to be able to compare and contrast ideas. The danger is that it can confine thinking. Robert J. Art in *A Grand Strategy for America* provides eight grand strategy

¹²⁵ Barry R. Posen, and Andrew L. Ross, “Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy,” In *Strategy and Force Planning*, 156-171

categories for classifying strategic thought. Throughout his book, he strongly argues for adopting a selective engagement. Robert Art's categories are a helpful tool when formulating strategies because when the topics are so complex, it's necessary to find key elements to attempt to conceptualize these ideas. His eight grand strategies are:

“*Dominion* aims to transform the world into what America thinks it should look like. This strategy would use American military power in an imperial fashion to effect the transformation (aims to rule the world)...

...*Isolationism* aims to maintain a free hand for the United States and its prime aim is to keep the United States out of most wars.

Offshore balancing generally seeks the same goals as isolationism, but would go one step further and cut down an emerging hegemon in Eurasia so as to maintain a favorable balance of power there.

Containment aims to hold a the line against a specific aggressor that either threatens American interest in a given region or that strives for world hegemony, through both deterrent and defensive uses of military power.

Global collective security aims to keep the peace by preventing war by any aggressor (everywhere)

Cooperative security aims to reduce the occurrence of war by limiting the offensive military capabilities of states, to keep the peace everywhere...

Regional collective security to keep peace within specified areas.”¹²⁶

“*Selective engagement* is a shaping strategy. It emphasizes the retention of America's key alliances and forward military presence...in order to help mold the political, military, and economic configurations of these regions...to make them more congenial to America's interest....”¹²⁷

One of the dangers of learning the labels for classifying grand strategic ideas or approaches is that it can become a sport. Strategists will be more interested in deciding how a new idea is classified or labeled instead of using it as a sorting tool. Another danger is in political maneuvering; labeling can limit development of ideas. So the key is to be aware of the labels, use them as a tool, but don't get stuck not thinking because of them.

Opposition to Comprehensive Grand Strategy – In all the writings and testimony surrounding the call for adopting a grand strategy, the testimony of General Jack Keane,

¹²⁶ Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America*, 82-83.

¹²⁷ Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America*, 223.

U.S. Army (Retired) stands out. General Keane said he does not think a grand strategy like the one that won the cold war would be particularly useful in our current environment. His testimony provided a unique voice to the debate. He gave two reasons why he did not think a grand strategy would be useful.

First, “we do not have a monolithic threat which subsumed all challenges...we face a multitude of challenges, from nuclear proliferation; radical Islam; instability in the Middle East; and in the some of the Arab-Muslim world, the reemergence of Russia as a potential adversary; the key relationships of India and China; global environmental challenges; the multitude of problems in Africa; and the need for energy independence.

Second, “most importantly, we are a nation at war. We don’t just have threats...we have enemies; enemies who will us harm...our strategy, should be focused on winning these wars and not on just ending these wars.”¹²⁸

General Keane was helpful in providing a unique voice to what has been a chorus proclaiming the need for a comprehensive grand strategy. General Keane isn’t really saying that a grand strategy isn’t necessary, just the opposite. He delivers the message as a warning not to throw something together and call it grand strategy, because the U.S. can’t afford to get it wrong.

“I have difficulty envisioning an overall grand strategy that relates to all these challenges. And most importantly, would define our response. That is what containment did; it provided us focus against a clear and present danger and unequivocally defined our response. It’s not that we could not conceive a grand strategy that encompasses our multifaceted challenges. We can. But it would, by necessity, be so overarching; I think it would lose a sense of realism and practicality.”¹²⁹

His insight in the complexities is a warning that this must be taken seriously. While it is simple logic that if a grand strategy is developed using a clearly defined process and

¹²⁸ Jack Keane, General U.S. Army (Retired), Hearing of the House Armed Services Committee, “Consideration for an American Grand Strategy,” September 24 2008. <http://www.cq.com/display.do?dockey=/cqonline/p...mittees&pub=congressionaltranscripts&print=true> (accessed February 18 2009; through LexisNexis)

¹²⁹ Jack Keane, Hearing of the House Armed Services Committee, September 24 2008.

articulated to synchronize all government actions to pursue the goals of the nation, General Keane's warning is it better be right. And he further advises, it is a challenging task that cannot be taken lightly, it will require commitment. "We are in another ideological struggle. This time with an enemy every bit as ambitious as the former Soviet Union, but in my view, more dangerous... (They) see the U.S. as their strategic enemy. Our strategy and commitment to defeat this enemy should be our highest priority now and in the future."¹³⁰

The Need for a Clear Process – The period since the end of the Cold War is a period of foggy thinking. The role of the U.S. national security apparatus varied with each Presidential administration and was not enduring in identifying a goal or purpose other than protection of national interests. The key to overcoming this fog is adopting a clear process for forming strategy at the grand strategic level. "Specificity is critical to good policy and strategy formulation. Specificity lends clarity as to policy's true intent and aids in the identification of the strategic factors important... (it) enables better strategy formulation, and helps identify responsibility, authority, and accountability."¹³¹ When the process isn't clearly defined, it fosters ambiguity. One hand is unaware of what the other is doing; often at odds with one another. One method for determining grand strategy is to study the speeches of leaders. "It comes in many iterative and cumulative forms ranging from formal national security directives, to pronouncements in presidential and cabinet-level speeches, to presidential replies to press queries or...appearances on current affairs television shows."¹³² That is a poor method for the most powerful nation in the world to base their strategy formulation on. The Presidential administration of George

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 120-121.

¹³² USAWC Appendix 1, 281.

W. Bush developed more written “national strategies” than any other administration. According to Yarger there were 19 published “national-level strategies” in 2007.¹³³ At the end of the administration the number was around 30. Most of these strategies are designed to ensure that specific departments in the executive branch have a common vision or set of objectives. This is the right idea, but there is no umbrella grand strategy to inform the whole of government. The potential for creating opposing policy is the threat to numerous strategies informed from speeches. The other threat is waste of resources. Stephen D. Biddle argues that

“...ambiguity creates important but unresolved tensions in American strategy. If the costs are low enough, these tensions are tolerable: the U.S. can avoid making hard choices and instead pursue ill-defined goals with limited penalties. But the higher the cost, the harder this becomes...eventually something will have to give—the ambiguity in today’s grand strategy is fast becoming intolerable.”¹³⁴

The U.S. can no longer afford literally or figuratively to continue to muddle out grand strategy, hoping that departments will get the strategy right. It’s time to develop a clear process for its formulation and communication throughout government.

In conclusion, the business of nations interacting occurs in an environment of cooperation and competition among state and non-state actors. All of those entities have goals and objectives that are informed by their national interests that include: security, economic prosperity, access to resources, value promotion, etc. A grand strategy identifies how these state and non-state actors will protect or achieve these goals. They will use instruments of power derived from their sources of power. The model provided a concept for how leadership will take their vision for the future, informed by interests and surrounded by the current operating environment, then match it with resources, while

¹³³ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 22.

¹³⁴ Stephen D. Biddle, 1.

continually assessing risk. The strategy then becomes the how or the way to achieve those objectives. The way is the linchpin of grand strategy.

There are many issues surrounding adopting a process for clearly defining and articulating grand strategy. There is clearly a perceived need for adopting a grand strategy with the intent that it would improve government efficiency. The step missed by most pundits is the need to draw the roadmap or the process that will make the selection of a grand strategy understood and accepted. The playing field for this effort is dynamic, with many actors and institutions, most with potentially self motivated influence. A clear process will build credibility to a grand strategy process.

CONCLUSION

“Twenty-first century warfare demands a new discipline for conceptualizing conflict. Operational art is an industrial age idea, suited primarily for breaking enemy formations of ships, aircraft, and troops in a theater of war wherein political and cultural issues are secondary...industrial age operational art will give place to information age grand strategy...like chain mail and cavalry charges, operational art must give place to modernity, and the grand strategist of tomorrow supplant the operational artist of yesterday.”

—Robert R. Leonhard, 2005¹³⁵

Grand Strategy is a process for thinking critically about the most important issue facing a nation. It is a complex decision-making process that at its heart strives to achieve national (*ends*) objectives with available *means*. The secret is in the solution sometimes called the “strategy” (Bartlett’s donut) but more commonly called the *ways*. This decision making is done in a highly charged, dynamic, emotional, often toxic environment that adds untold logical and illogical, rational and irrational variables that affect the result. Add to that—just when you think the “answer” is at hand, the situation changes and the process continues.

The reasons are crystal clear as to why the U.S. government must adopt a clearly defined process for developing and articulating grand strategy. First, a well-defined process to clearly develop a strategy would reduce redundancies and inefficiencies. Second, there is no common document to guide what’s important for the whole of government. It is possible that Senator Warner intended that role for the NSS. More likely, the NSS was placed to keep an eye on the executive. But the thought that a real attempt was made to identify common goals across the security interests of government is promising. A GSUS would eliminate redundancy and build a framework to share

¹³⁵ Robert R. Leonhard, 217, 222.

information so policy and resource development could complement one another. This act would be a better investment of national treasure and make government more effective. It would also improve how limited resources can be invested, and would go a long way in eliminating the fallout from shocks to the system. Third, an overarching understanding that all citizens could rally around would give strength to the nation. The absence of guiding principles, especially in a chaotic world, weakens the ability to effectively and efficiently use national power to accomplish objectives. Understanding among all actors about where the national leadership wants to lead, not just in security but in clearly articulating the national interests and understanding how government is to align itself in attaining national goals is essential to a healthy nation.

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BIOGRAPHY

Lt Col Paul B. Eberhart is a Student at National Defense University's Joint Advanced Warfighting School in Norfolk, VA. He's the former Commander of the 16th Airlift Squadron, 437th Ops Group, 437th Airlift Wing, Charleston AFB, SC. Lt Col Eberhart was born May 4, 1966 at Mather AFB, California. He graduated from the University of Kansas in 1989 with a Bachelor's Degree in Communications and from Northwestern Oklahoma State University in 1998 with a Master's Degree in International Relations. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant through AFROTC on May 22, 1989.

After completing undergraduate pilot training at Vance AFB, OK, Lt Col Eberhart was selected to remain at Vance as a T-37 Instructor Pilot. In 1996, he was assigned to the 14th Airlift Sq, Charleston AFB, SC as a C-17 Instructor Pilot. In 1999, Lt Col Eberhart was selected for Air Mobility Command's PHOENIX HAWK leadership program. He served as a MAJCOM Regional Operations Director assigned to HQ AMC TACC Directorate of Command and Control and later served as a Command Presentations Officer on the AMC Command Briefing Team. In 2001, Lt Col Eberhart was assigned to the 62nd Operational Support Squadron as a C-17A Instructor Pilot and the Wing Chief of Training. After graduating from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in 2003, Lt Col Eberhart joined the Department of Joint and Multinational Operations faculty as an instructor until his selection as the senior Executive Officer to the Commander Eighteenth Air Force, Scott AFB, IL.

Lt Col Eberhart is a command pilot with over 3300 hours. He is a Distinguished Graduate from Squadron Officer School, graduate from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and graduate from the Joint Forces Staff College. He is married to [REDACTED] and they have [REDACTED] children.